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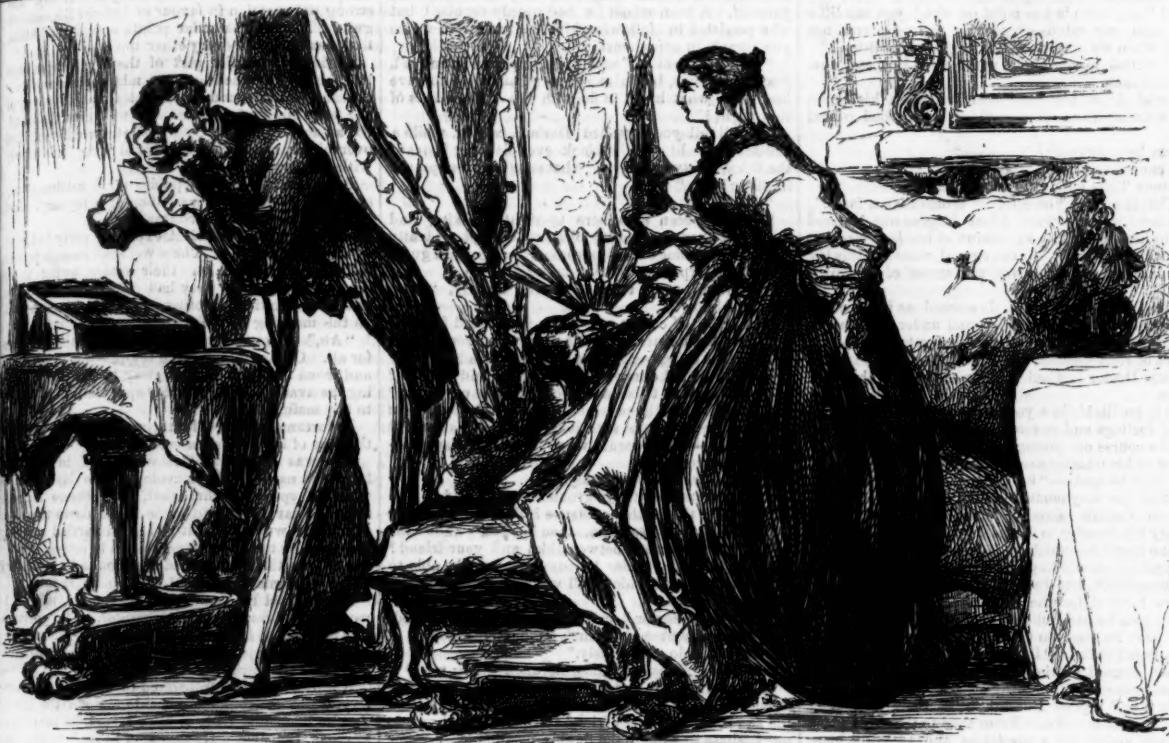
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[CHENEY TOFTS EXCITES THE JEALOUSY OF THE SEÑORITA AND ASTONISHES HIMSELF.]

THE STRANGER'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
*"The Seventh Marriage," "The Warning Voice," "Men and
his Idol," &c.*

CHAPTER XXXIX. THE ACCUSED.

I say I don't believe you guilty, but
Appearances are all against you.
Sheridan Knowles.

The indignation with which Gabriel Edgecombe listened to the charge of murder preferred against him by Cheney Tofts was, to all appearance, genuine.

So was the reproachful tone in which he upbraided the agitated Flora as the cause of this terrible accusation. It was impossible that he should have forgotten what had passed between them in his study, when she surprised him in the act of looking over his fire-arms; and, naturally enough, he came to the conclusion that she had betrayed his secrets and so placed his very life in danger.

Recovering himself with a strong effort, Gabriel addressed his accuser.

"I throw back your accusation with contempt," he said.

"As you please," replied Tofts. "But I do not lose sight of you till it is either substantiated or refuted."

An evil light began to glow in Gabriel's eyes, and his face grew ominously white.

"It is as easy to bluster as to accuse," he said, "and to men of your nature both courses are natural. But apart from the consideration that you are here as my father's guest—here on my invitation—it would be only just and fair that you should bring some proof in support of the charge that I have murdered—that is your word—murdered the friend for whose sake only you are a guest in this house."

Cheney Tofts winced under these words; but he would not show it. Though his very lips were white with anger, he bit the colour into them, and preserved

his callous front. Still, never had he appeared to such disadvantage as at that moment; the true vulgarity of his nature came out under excitement through the thin varnish of refinement with which it was overlaid.

"You ask for proof?" he exclaimed. "Jove! isn't there proof enough? Do you think everybody's blind? Is there a soul in this room who hasn't seen your mad jealousy and envy of poor Onslow? He's more fascinating than you are, and you hate him for it. He's a way of winning over the women, and you're horribly jealous of him. I've seen it and known it from the first. And now you get him alone on a solitary island, shoot him, plunge him into the river, and overcome with remorse, or terror, or sheer cowardice, rush from the spot leaving your pistol there in proof of your dastardly act. Proof! You ask for it and you've got it."

Dorian interrupted.

"You are wrong," he said; "every link in your chain of reasoning is an assumption. The man's death—to begin with."

"Hang it, doctor," Tofts retorted, "we're not children, nor idiots. If he lives why is he not here? He had no means of leaving the island, no chance of concealment on it. And if he had, what motive was there for his disappearance?"

"Motive!" ejaculated Sir Noel Edgecombe, speaking for the first time. "You ask that? You would use it as an argument? Have you forgotten your own words on the night of the fire? I have not. You said 'Nothing that he does startles me. I know too much of him. I know how odd, eccentric, and erratic he is. He has no purpose in anything that he does!' And when I asked in surprise, 'None?' you gravely repeated that assurance. Believe me, no one can feel more uneasiness than I do for the safety of our guest; but after your own admission, I cannot consent to take his non-appearance as a proof of his death. Certainly not as a link in the chain of proof that our darling Gabriel has been guilty of a monstrous crime."

Tofts was for a moment abashed.

He had not expected to hear this. His words turned against him in complete silence. Hereupon, this,

calm, unsympathetic tone in which the baronet had spoken awoke a fresh suspicion in his mind. It suggested complicity. It forced him to ask himself whether it was possible that Onslow's fears were well founded, when he suspected the Edgecombes of having united in a conspiracy for his destruction?

However that might be, about Gabriel's crime he felt little question.

"I am no match for you in argument, Sir Noel," he retorted; "but I have my convictions as to what has happened, and I repeat that I shall hold your son responsible for my friend until he reappears, which I've firm belief he will never do, poor fellow!"

With these words Tofts took a chair near him, and drawing it toward the door, sat down with a lowering brow and folded arms. The action was most significant. In taking it, he withdrew himself from the circle, while the position he took up implied that he regarded Gabriel as his prisoner.

So the young man understood it, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could suppress the anger and indignation with which his bosom heaved. He looked to Blanche—to his own affianced Blanche—for sympathy and support; but her face was averted, and she lay back as one who had swooned. His eyes wandered to those of his beloved sister, but only to meet glances of pitying condemnation.

This aroused all his ireful feelings.

"You see," he said, "you see to what the sister's part you have played so well has led!"

Flora, trembling and overcome, tottered forward, and falling on her knees before him, raised her clasped hands to his face.

"You wrong me, Gabriel—brother! Indeed, indeed you wrong me," she said. "I have breathed no word against you. I know nothing. Appearances only accuse you of this dreadful thing. And surely you can yourself offer an explanation of them?"

"Explanation!" he ejaculated fiercely. "No. I knew nothing."

"Nay, Gabriel, think. Reflect on what it is that speaks so strangely against you. One of your own pistols, removed from its case, discharged while you were upon the island, and found on the spot where



you had been. It must be possible to account for this."

He shook his head.

"Not a word?" pleaded Flora. "Have you nothing to confess, to suggest, or to explain? The suspicion against you is so terrible; the ground of it so palpable. Surely, surely you reconcile your innocence to your own mind; and if so, why not to ours?"

"No," he replied, with a melancholy sigh, "I can explain nothing!"

"You cannot, or you will not, brother dear?"

"I cannot."

"At least, there is one point on which you can lift a load from my mind—were you or were you not armed when we set out on this hapless expedition?"

She waited for the reply with parted lips and suspended breath.

Gabriel drew his hand wearily across his brow, as if striving to recall something which had passed away.

Then he answered:

"I cannot recollect."

Cheney Tofts burst into a loud laugh.

"This is a farce," he said. "Worse than a farce."

Without another word Flora Edgecombe tottered back to her seat. The expression of her face was one of utter hopelessness. What special cause for this lay in Gabriel's last words was the secret of her own breast.

A dead silence followed. It seemed as if the occupants of the room were spell-bound under the shadow of a crime too awful and overwhelming to be made the subject of conversation.

It was Doctor Doriani who broke through the ice of silence.

"It is creditable in a young man, who naturally has strong feelings and generous emotions, that he should take the course our young friend has determined on in respect to his missing associate"—so he began, looking at Tofts as he spoke—"but a little reflection must show him that he may commit an act of gross injustice. Suppose Onslow should return uninjured, what apology can he offer to Gabriel for this serious charge and the insult by which he is following it up? Suppose again, it should happen that a serious outrage had been committed, but by other hands, would he ever forgive himself for the cruel words and the unnecessary pain he had inflicted on an innocent man?"

"I have no time to think of these things," replied Tofts impatiently. "I have acted as a friend could only act toward a friend, and I am prepared to take the consequences."

"Be it so," replied Doriani, "still there is one fact which I must mention. From time to time this place has been visited by a suspicious and ruffianly man. You may remember him?"

Tofts looked up uneasily.

"I—I don't know"—he began.

"Stay," interrupted the doctor, "I may be able to refresh your memory. He first introduced himself into this house as a friend of Onslow's; when he had succeeded in meeting him, high words passed between them, which resulted in the fellow's finding himself sprawling at the foot of the hall-stairs. You heard of this?"

With increased uneasiness Tofts sullenly assented.

"Good. The man called himself Onslow's friend. But was he? If so, what did that angry altercation mean? And that desperate end to the interview between them?"

"Do friends never quarrel?" demanded Tofts, suddenly. "Jove! I should say they did. Rather!"

"Quite right. They do, and resentments between friends are fiercer and more enduring than between ordinary mortals. Now Onslow used this man savagely; there can be no doubt of it. And what followed? He disappeared for a time, no one knew where. That he did not quit these parts is clear; that he concealed himself from observation, is equally true. In this there must have been a motive."

"You assume so," said Tofts.

"I have a right to do it. A man of that sort is not likely to hang about a place like this without an object, and what is that most likely to have been?"

"Jove! How should I know?"

"And yet it is not difficult to guess. After a brief period of concealment, the man—whose face is enough to hang him—reappeared. When? You know. It was on the night of the fire. On that occasion Onslow returned abruptly to the Manor House, in time to witness its partial destruction by lightning. He has never explained to me, or to anyone that I am aware of, what his purpose was in leaving for Nestleborough that day, or why he came back early and unexpectedly. There was no reason why he should offer any such explanation. He was free to come and go as he chose; but in my own mind I have always suspected that he had business of a private nature with this unknown individual."

"Possibly. It's no affair of mine," said Tofts.

"Nor mine; but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact

that the night when that happened was the very night on which this unsavoury personage reappeared. He was at the fire. He took a decided interest in Onslow. For what reason you can no doubt explain?"

"I?"

"Certainly. You recognized him at once."

"As a man I had before seen."

"True; and as one whose presence there occasioned your surprise and consternation."

"Why should it? For what reason?"

"That you can best explain. My conclusion was that this was a man dangerous to your friend, or to yourself. A man whom he had openly repulsed, but who persisted in following him up, and from whom you shrank in apprehension."

"Your supposition," said Tofts, angry and annoyed, "was ingenious, but false. But admitting it to have been true, what has it to do with the transactions of this night?"

"I will tell you," replied Doriani, calmly, while a sinister glow lit up the black eyes flashing beneath the thick, frosty eyebrows, "that man has reappeared in these parts."

"Ha!"

"He has been seen here to-night, lurking and dodging as usual, avoiding observation, yet evidently carrying out some settled purpose. Can you not guess what that purpose may have been?"

"Why ask me?" retorted Tofts, fiercely, "how should I know?"

"Know? Of course not. But is it hard for you, for any of us, to surmise what may have brought this ill-favoured being back to the locality he had quitted? What but the old quarrel between him and Onslow?—the old designs to be carried out in some new form? Be that as it may, the presence of a man between whom and Onslow there was notoriously ill-blood, should at least be taken into account when the latter's disappearance is in question."

Tofts answered, impatiently:

"Your fears are utterly groundless," he said.

"You say this with confidence? You have grounds for making that assertion, then? You knew the nature of the intimacy between him and your friend? I am glad to know this, because you may be able to set before me facts which will warrant me in securing his apprehension."

"Nonsense, doctor," cried Tofts, greatly agitated, "you do not contemplate such a monstrous step?"

"Indeed I do. Seriously."

"What! Arrest an innocent, unoffending man?"

"You forget. It is your own inference that a great crime has been committed. Your suspicions fall on the son of my honoured friend and patron, and you do not hesitate to assume the double position of accuser and gaoler. Does not all this justify the arrest of a man who comes among us under circumstances of the greatest suspicion, who is known to have been at enmity with the man you suppose to have been foully treated? I repeat that he will not be suffered to quit this place until the mystery of Neville Onslow's disappearance is cleared up."

The words produced a singular effect on Cheney Tofts.

"I must see this man," he said.

"Yes. In the presence of a magistrate," was the quick reply.

"Impossible! You cannot mean it?"

"And why not?"

Tofts could not reply.

Doriani continued:

"You have taken a decided step in respect to your friend, and following the lesson you set, I can't be indifferent to the fair fame of the son of Sir Noel Edgecombe. His innocence must be vindicated at any cost."

Tofts, pale and trembling, rose from his seat.

"I will withdraw the charge I have made against Gabriel Edgecombe, on one condition," he said.

"And the condition is?"

"That the liberty of this man shall not be interfered with, and that he shall be permitted to depart unquestioned."

Doriani's face wrinkled itself into a sardonic grin.

"I must decline to accept those terms," he said, "and for this simple reason—by this time your friend is reported to the police!"

Cheney Tofts dropped into the chair from which he had risen. His features expressed a degree of consternation which he found it impossible to conceal.

CHAPTER XL.

TRACES OF THE LOST ONE.

The very sky turns pale above,

The earth grows dark beneath;

The human terror thrills with cold

And draws a shorter breath—

An universal panic marks

The dread approach of Death. Hood.

MORNING, and no news.

A bright, breezy summer morning, pure and fresh,

full of sunshine and fragrance, and musical with birds. Such a morning as seems inconsistent with mystery, bloodshed, and the darker crimes which outrage humanity.

And yet under that serene heaven, among scenes radiant with God's own glorious sunshine, one hideous topic filled men's mouths. Men! The sweet voices of women discoursed of it, and it mingled with the prattle of innocent children.

Murder was the theme.

The mysterious disappearance of Neville Onslow on Lady Edith's Island. The certainty of foul play. The strong presumption in favour of Gabriel Edgecombe's guilt. These and similar points occupied all minds to the exclusion of every other topic.

During the earlier part of the day, a vague hope had been entertained that the missing man would reappear. The ground of this idea was, however, of the very slightest nature. As we know, the island, not an acre in extent, had been thoroughly explored over-night, not once but several times, and utterly without success.

But in such cases the public mind catches at any straw which may offer a solution of a mystery. And the straw in this instance was this.

It came out that the last exploring party had gone down in these boats. There were not enough persons to fill them all, and on their return, owing to the density of the mist, they had only trouble to secure two boats, leaving the other where it had been moored. In the morning this third boat was missing.

"Ah," suggested the clever one, "that accounts for all. Onslow was on the island—was overlooked; and when the mist cleared away in the early morning, he availed himself of this spare boat, and crossed to the mainland."

Unfortunately for this theory, two facts stood in the way of its general reception.

One was that, had Onslow escaped in that way, he would naturally have made for the Manor House, with all speed. The other, that before long the missing boat was found some miles down the river, a complete wreck, as if it had been carried away by the force of the stream and dashed to pieces.

And was this all that had been found in the river?

That became the natural and general inquiry.

By Sir Noel Edgecombe's orders, men had set to work at daybreak to drag the water. The operation was continued hour after hour without intermission; but the main object of this labour was not attained.

Neville Onslow's body was not found.

Nothing whatever transpired to clear up the mystery which surrounded his fate. From the instant that he landed on Lady Edith's Island, he became, so to speak, invisible. He was seen to land, to approach the spectre, and he was seen no more. Had he vanished into thin air his disappearance could not have been more complete.

In such a case it was natural to search for blood-stains and traces of violence. Were any such visible? The first answer to that question was that nothing resembling blood could be detected. Afterwards, a large dark stain, partly on the grass, partly on a bed of soft mould, was declared to be of a suspicious nature, and investigation showed that it really was blood.

Here then was fair proof that the pistol-shot had taken effect. But the discovery only complicated the matter and increased the mystery. A wounded man must have had extra difficulty in escaping from the island, and if he had fallen or had been thrown into the river, his chances of saving himself were small indeed. According to this view of the matter, Neville Onslow's body ought to have been found in the water.

The sanguine insisted that it must be found there. Yet hour after hour went by, and no such result was obtained. No discovery was made. Not a corner of the dense pall of mystery was lifted.

During these hours of suspense each of the inhabitants of the Manor House was affected by the terrible event of the over-night in a different manner.

For the greater part of the morning Sir Noel and Lady Edgecombe, attended by Doctor Doriani, sat in the library—the window of which, as of every room in the house, had been darkened—conversing in low tones, while awaiting intelligence of whatever might be transpiring.

Each of the little group appeared nervous and apprehensive, but more especially Doriani.

His eyes wandered perpetually toward the door, and it was clearly by great effort that he restrained an impulse to depart.

"Your intelligence is equally at fault in seeking to fathom this mystery?" Sir Noel asked, as he observed this peculiar restlessness.

"Equally," was the absent answer.

"I thought it just possible that in your devotion to our interests, you—"

Doriani looked sharply toward the smooth face of the baronet.

"No," he answered, emphatically.

"Our good doctor would hardly have compromised

poor Gabriel," said Lady Edgecombe. "Unfortunate! that this should have happened at such a time and in such a manner. Is there a fatality about us, that even what we most wish cannot happen without adding to our difficulties? It will not be possible to establish Gabriel's innocence without making disclosures that will defeat all our ambitious hopes for him, even if it does not cause him to perish broken-hearted?"

Doriani smiled.

"Hearts are tough," he replied; "so, at least, anatomy teaches us."

"True," replied her ladyship, "but Gabriel loves Blanche Selwyn with an ardour that is already undermining his health. Poor boy! The bare thought that she does not return his affection has driven him to the verge of desperation."

"Why not beyond it, as this act would seem to prove?"

"Because I cannot bring myself to believe that Gabriel has been guilty of this crime. And you—do you seriously think it?"

The doctor rose, with the air of a man disinclined to be thus closely questioned.

"I dare not form an opinion," he said.

And unable to resist the restless impulse upon him, he abruptly quitted the library.

Equally overcome with the mystery of the night, with the horror that brooded over the house, which to all appearance shielded a murderer, red-handed, Lord Englestone had sought the seclusion of a little boudoir—a dainty retreat, fitted with geranium-coloured silk—which had been appropriated to Blanche's use.

For child! It availed her little that she was surrounded there by all that taste and elegance could devise. To the maimed bird no nest is soft; and when the heart aches it matters little whether it bears its agony in a palace or a hovel.

Lord Englestone—haughty and reserved, keeping a check on his feelings, which had the effect of making his face a mask, so little did it reveal what passed beneath it—could not understand the intensity of feeling by which his daughter was agitated.

He sat erect in one of the straight-backed chairs of the olden time, his right leg crossed over his left, watching Blanche as she lay on a sofa beside him, her face buried in the pillows, her frame heaving with convulsive sobs.

To all his questions and remonstrances she had but one reply.

"It is so horrible!" she exclaimed.

"But," argued his lordship, "Gabriel may be innocent. This person may have fallen by another hand; his fate may even have been brought about by his own imprudence. It is natural that you should feel your lover's position acutely, and his conduct was certainly strange and full of suspicion; but this excess of grief is weak. It is unwomanly, and quite unworthy of my pet."

How idle was all this remonstrance! Idle! It was worse. It added tenfold to the sufferings poor Blanche endured. Twenty times she was on the point of throwing herself at his lordship's feet and confessing all. It would have been a relief beyond all description could she have laid her head against her father's loving breast, and told him that he was utterly wrong in what he supposed, and naturally so, to be the cause of her anguish; that her early love for Gabriel had been supplanted by a fierce, lava-like passion, that swept through her being, carrying everything but the one sense of duty before it. But she could not make this revelation.

Knowing her father's rigid, business-like habits, knowing how thoughtfully all his plans for her happiness had been laid and matured, from her girlhood upwards, she had not the heart to scatter all his hopes to the winds; and more than this, she shuddered at the idea of what would follow should she make an avowal of the infatuation that possessed her, the love that had sprung up in her heart toward a comparative stranger, a man respecting whose birth, position, and fortune she knew absolutely nothing.

Such was not the sort of avowal which Lord Englestone, one of the haughtiest aristocrats in England, was likely to listen to with much patience. His devotion to his only child might induce him to tolerate much. He might even make sacrifices for her happiness. But such a sacrifice as this? Impossible! The bare thought of it would embitter his remaining days.

Blanche thought of all this as she lay coiled up on the luxurious couch, that could give her no ease; and the only miserable ray of comfort vouchsafed her was the reflection that if Neville Onslow had indeed perished, the avowal of her heart's secret might be spared her, and that she might carry it with her to an early grave.

Sometimes in these desolate moments the thought suggested itself that her place was properly by Gabriel's side. His ardent love and passionate devotion to her remained unabated. Of that she was conscious, and her heart smote her when she reflected

that she was returning his truth and constancy so basely. Yes, she owned it. Her conduct was base, wrong, disingenuous, even wicked. All that was most foreign to her character, all that her simple, innocent, child-like nature most reviled from was actuating her conduct; and yet she could not struggle against the infatuation that had overmastered and rendered her powerless.

One moment she said, "I will go to Gabriel—I will cheer and comfort him!"

The next, every fibre of her being seemed to quiver in revolt.

"No," she exclaimed, "I cannot! I should shriek aloud at the touch of the hand that may have taken Neville's life."

So she went not.

She was spared the spectacle of Gabriel, prostrate with anguish and despair, with the agony of unrequited love, with the torturing accusation of having shed a fellow creature's blood—she was spared the sight of him grovelling upon the floor, too miserable even to care what might be the solution of the mystery which compromised not only his happiness, but his life. A knowledge of these torturing moments was shared alone by Flora Edgecombe, who in the depths of her sisterly affection, clung to the brother whose guilt she more than suspected, and though refused admission, never quitted the door of his room, but crouched beside it, hour after hour, in the faint hope that he might be moved to confide in her love, or seek consolation in her sympathy.

Of all the inmates of the Manor House, the only one who did not yield to the influence of the dread shadow that had survived the night, and blotted out the sunshine of the summer day, was Cheney Tofts.

His regret for his lost friend took a practical shape.

By daylight he had been down the river superintending the drags. In an hour or two he was back again, active, enquiring, satisfying the curiosity of one, asking questions of another, always active, busy, and on the alert.

The loss of his friend might have affected him deeply; but it did not render him melancholy or inactive. And it almost seemed as if the intelligence Doctor Doriani had given him respecting the mysterious personage whose reappearance on the scene at this juncture was—to say the least of it—suspicious, made a much deeper impression on his mind.

Doriani had stated that he had taken measures for this man's arrest.

From that moment Tofts knew no peace.

Wherefore?

In the conversation they had once held in the park, they had addressed one another as father and son. This might have been the relationship between them; even then it would not have accounted for Tofts' perturbation. The tie of blood might have united them; but assuredly it was not cemented by affection. The younger man's treatment of the elder on that occasion had been brutal. It implied no sort of respect or regard, and in truth, such sentiments were foreign to Cheney Tofts' nature.

Other and different motives must have led to his uneasiness.

Prompted by it, he, after some hesitation, betook himself to Doriani's house. He did not know that the doctor was at the Manor House, and hoped to have an interview with him of a private and confidential nature.

To reach the doctor's abode it was necessary—as we have already noted—to cross the river. Aware of this, Cheney Tofts made for the ferry-boat, always moored to the landing-stage at the bottom of the park.

As he drew near, a light skiff, in which two persons were seated, shot up to the landing-place, and one of the two men sprang to the bank.

His manner was hasty, eager and full of excitement.

Tofts could not resist the question which rose to his lips.

"What has happened?" he asked.

The man pointed to the boat.

"The murdered man's hat," he said; "we've found it layin' amon' the rushes, close by the weir, five miles down the river."

As he spoke his companion untied the knots of a red handkerchief, and disclosed a hat, battered and sodden from the effects of the water; but unmistakeably the hat Neville Onslow had worn.

At the sight of this Cheney Tofts felt little doubt as to the fate of his friend.

It seemed to speak unmistakably of foul play, the result of which it was folly no longer to question.

CHAPTER XL.

DORIANI AT A DISADVANTAGE.

Again that name hath knelled upon mine ear.

Though I have never voiced it. *Festus.*

The finding of Neville Onslow's hat confirmed the general alarm as to his fate; but it did not in

the least help to clear up the mystery which enveloped it.

So Cheney Tofts thought, as he continued on his way to Doriani's house.

It added nothing to the suspicions against Gabriel Edgecombe; nor, on the other hand, did it detract from those already entertained.

And what of the man about whom he was more concerned than even about his friend? What of the spiky-headed, low-browed, bull-necked, yellow-fanged individual, whom he had called father? Clearly his position remained the same; and whatever course Doriani intended to adopt respecting him he would still adopt, unless he, Tofts, had influence enough to divert him from his purpose.

This it was necessary to prove.

On reaching the house, Tofts received the first blow to his object. Doriani was not at home; but the señorita was in the drawing-room. Would he see her?

For once he hesitated. The purpose with which he had come there was so much more important than any he hoped to secure by his flirtation with the doctor's pretty wife, that it was hard to bring his mind to pursue the inferior object. Still, he was there, and it would be impolite not to pay his respects to the lady.

He therefore suffered himself to be announced.

Juanita was surprised and delighted. It was the hour at which she took her morning cigarette, and she was coiled up in a corner of the big sofa in the drawing-room in the full enjoyment of it. The pleasant odour that filled the apartment had produced a dreamy effect on those large black orbs which constituted the charm of the Spanish face, and the pose of the figure, though charming, was suggestive of languor rather than healthy activity.

At a word from Tofts she sprang up.

"This is so kind," she murmured. "I believed you had forgotten poor me."

"Forgotten you!"

With that reproachful exclamation he rushed forward, and falling on one knee, covered the plump little hand, or so much of it as was not hidden by rings, with rapturous kisses.

"Doriani is absent?" he asked.

"Yes. But you knew that?"

He looked up with a meaning smile which she could only interpret into acquiescence.

"Mateo was summoned hastily away," the señorita said. "He received a letter which caused him the utmost excitement. I never saw him more thoroughly moved."

The man's curiosity was excited.

"You read it?" he asked.

"No."

"What! Ah, this connubial confidence is charming! Charming! This Arcadian simplicity and absence of all doubt and suspicion. Happy Mateo Doriani! And thrice happy Juanita!"

He spoke with mock ecstasy, and turned up his eyes and clasped his hands as he ceased in a manner that was not to be mistaken.

"You blame me?" Juanita asked, her very temples flushing with confusion. "You think I trust him too blindly?"

"Love is blind," was the sententious remark.

"Be frank with me," pleaded the charming little woman, in her child-like way. "I am so simple—so ignorant of the ways of the world. And you have had such experience. Tell me, then, do you suspect that Mateo is deceiving me? In a word, that I have cause for jealousy?"

To which entreaty Tofts' only reply was a laugh, with more of a sneer than heart in it.

"Jove! It's so hard to judge for married people," he replied; "all depends on the amount of liberty they permit one another. Some are jealous and exacting. Others open and trusting. As a rule, it is wise for wives not to be too curious. It's not likely to add to their peace of mind. At least, that's my opinion."

"You mean to imply," said Juanita, her black eyes flashing, and her bosom heaving, "that Mateo is indifferent to me?"

"By no means—"

"That he treats me like a child, taking advantage of my simplicity and inexperience?"

"Why, as to that—"

"And that if I knew all I should have cause to be most unhappy—most, most wretched."

The tears came into those great orbs, black as night, and she turned away. Poor little woman! Wayward and impetuous as a spoiled child, snatched from the sunny south, with its freedom and vivacity, and cooped up in this solitary home, with a husband old enough to be her father, what wonder that she was fretful and capricious?—what wonder that she compromised herself by thoughtless words and a freedom of conduct beyond what is usually recognized among our moreせせら countrywomen, while her bosom was agitated by alternate storms of love and jealousy?

Tofts sitting by her side eyed her sharply and with a contemptuous curl of the lip.

"Why make yourself thus unhappy, Juanita?" he said, at length, venturing to lift a jet-black ringlet that had strayed over her shoulder, and to smooth it between his finger and thumb. "If my coming only makes you unhappy, 'tis better we should never meet."

"No," she replied, quickly, "for you know all. You can tell me all. Don't fear to speak out. I can bear the truth, whatever it is; but these hints and innuendoes kill me."

"My dear soul," replied Tofts, "I have hinted at nothing. I know nothing. You tell me that Doriani is secret in his movements, and I am man of the world enough to tell you that secrecy is always suspicious. You say he receives letters and telegrams, and quits you without admitting you to his confidence, and I naturally ask—why does he do this? Why should he do this? Is the question so very unnatural?"

"He might have shown me the letter," said Juanita, piteously.

"Instead of which—he destroys it?"

"No."

"Or carries it off in his pocket-book?"

"No. It is in his desk."

"Locked?"

"I suppose so."

The tempter sprang up in affected surprise.

"You don't know?" he demanded. "You permit your husband to insult you by refusing to confide in you as his wife, and you make no attempt to assert a wife's privileges? I do not advise you one way or the other; but you do yourself an injustice while you leave that letter unread. Stay! You have some scruples. As a proof of the Platonic affection you have inspired in me, I will take upon myself the responsibility of perusing that letter on your behalf. It will free you from unpleasantness. You will be able to say with a clear conscience that you have not touched it."

Before Juanita could remonstrate, this dangerous, because unscrupulous man, in whose power she had placed herself, had turned to a side table, on which stood a *papier maché* writing-desk, and was bending over it. To all appearance it was unlock'd, and he simply raised the lid: in reality, he applied to the lock a simple instrument which had before been used for a similar purpose, and forced back the wards of the lock. The next moment he had taken out a letter, and was reading it.

Cool and impudent as Mr. Cheney Tofts habitually was, something in that letter caused him to give vent to an exclamation of intense surprise.

Juanita sprang up.

"You have made some discovery?" she asked.

"One moment," replied Tofts, his hand to his brow; "let me think."

While he thus snatched a moment for reflection, his eyes wandered over every part of the letter. He examined the address and the post-marks, and so gradually brought himself to comprehend what had at first puzzled as much as it had startled him. It may suffice for us to know, that the letter had been forwarded, with a few explanatory lines, by the solicitor to whom Doriani wrote over-night—Mr. J. P. Duncannon, Louthbury, London; that it was addressed to Andrew Fenton, Milford Haven—the name which, it will be remembered, the doctor had assumed; and was signed "Martin Harwood"—a name with which the reader is as yet unfamiliar.

It took the audacious Tofts some moments before he could in the least unravel the mystery presented to his astonished gaze.

And no sooner had a glimmer of the truth dawned on his brain—a mere suspicion, at best, but still enough to excite his strongest interest—than he felt the necessity of concealing all he said or suspected from Juanita. Those large eyes of hers, looking him through and through, must, he felt, be hood-winked; and that was only to be done by some ready lie—some plausible invention.

Acting on this idea, he crumpled up the letter in his hand, with a sudden and fierce impetuosity.

"What are you doing?" cried the doctor's wife.

"Don't, Juanita! Don't ask me!" was the answer.

"It is as you suspected, then? Mateo is deceiving me?"

"He is your husband and my friend," said Tofts, with well-assumed emotion; "I cannot betray him or condemn him on mere suspicion; I must know more. I must watch—make enquiries—assure myself that I am justified in suspecting him, and taking the part of the weak and injured against the crafty and perfidious. Let me go at once, Juanita. Do not delay my departure. I go to serve you—to make your cause my own. And I go—may I say it?—with your image glowing and radiant in my heart."

A piteous sigh, a hasty kiss imprinted on the jewelled hand, and Juanita was alone.

Still grasping the letter he had so daringly purloined, Cheney Tofts strode from the house and out of

the grounds with quick, irregular steps, betraying the fiercest excitement.

"Jove! what discovery!" he ejaculated, half aloud. "It's impossible. Not to be credited. A little flirtation with that foolish woman lead to this? No, no, I must mistake. I must be deceived, bewildered, delirious. Hang it, I can't think. My head's in a maze—in a whirl. There's a simoom raging in my brain. Let me read this again." He smoothed the crumpled letter as he spoke.

"I assure you it where no breach of trust on mi part, but pur accident. Oping you will forgive me, and promising to du mi beatt u repear wat 'ave happened, I remaine, your obedient servant,

MARTIN HARWOOD."

There's no mistake here. The only point for us is to identify the man of whom this letter speaks with—"

He paused abruptly, seeing, as he spoke, the tall, round-shouldered figure of Doriani advancing toward him.

It was a critical moment.

Though Tofts had himself sought an interview with Doriani, he would have given anything at that moment for a little time for reflection, for arranging his plans, for shaping his own thoughts before they met. This, however, was impossible.

Before he had time to determine on any course of action, they were hand in hand,

"You have given me a call?" asked the doctor.

"Yes. I—I wished to speak with you."

"About your unfortunate friend?"

"No."

Doriani raised his frosted eyebrows.

"You were mentioning that you had taken steps to secure the arrest of a man who was supposed to be an enemy of Onslow's?" said Tofts.

"True."

"Your suspicions were directed against him?"

"Naturally."

"Perhaps so; but I am in a position to disabuse your mind. He is wholly innocent of this crime, if crime has been committed."

"You speak confidently. You know this man?"

"I do."

"And you take the trouble to come here again to ask me to accept your assurance of his innocence, and to take no steps against him?"

"Exactly."

"Will you excuse my saying that this request comes with anything but a good grace from you at this moment? You are Onslow's friend. You have accompanied him here as Sir Noel Edgecombe's guest. Of all others, therefore, you should be most moved by what has happened to him; most desirous that his fate should be placed beyond question, and that guilt should meet its deserts."

"I am anxious, most anxious, about this matter," replied Tofts.

"And yet you interpose a strong personal wish that no steps may be taken against a man who lies open to the gravest suspicion. If he is innocent, suspicion cannot hurt him; if guilty, I, for one, should never forgive myself were I to connive at his escape."

"I tell you," replied Tofts, angrily, "that I will answer for him."

"And I reply, that in such a case, where the question of guilt is likely to rest between him and the son of my oldest friend, I cannot accept even your assurance on the matter. Reflect, Mr. Tofts, on the sort of man this is."

"Judged by appearances—yes."

"And by what else are we to judge? You have not even confided to me his name."

Tofts did not answer; but devoted himself to his only resource in cases of difficulty, that of sucking the knob of his cane.

"Am I to understand by your silence," asked Doriani, "that you object to entrusting me with the man's name?"

"I do."

"And his address and occupation?"

"Doctor Doriani," he said, "I have my own reasons for declining to satisfy your curiosity on these points. I tell you this man is innocent; I will say further, that no good could come from detaining and questioning him, but much harm. Personally, I repeat, that I will be responsible for him, even to the extent of his appearance if called on to answer to this charge. I again ask you to do me the favour of accepting my word on this point."

"And I again reply that what you ask is impossible."

An angry flush suffused the brow of Cheney Tofts, and his right hand clenched tighter around the letter which it still grasped. The crackle of the paper inspired him with an idea.

"My personal undertaking is insufficient?" he asked, with a bitter sneer.

"Yes."

"And if I unite another name with my own?"

"That would depend."

"Upon the name?"

"Clearly upon the name."

Tofts bent forward, and Doriani inclined his ear.

MARTIN HARWOOD?"

A sudden spasm seemed to knit up the frame of the strange doctor; his clasped hands were pressed into his chest till those rounded shoulders were like a hoop.

Whatever reply he made it died inarticulate on his blue lips.

(To be continued.)

RICH, THOUGH POOR.

NO RODD OF LAND IN ALL THE EARTH,
No ships upon the sea,

Nor treasures rare, nor gems, nor gold,
Do any keep for me.

As yesterday I wrought for bread,
So must I toll to-day;

Yet some are not so rich as I,
Nor I so poor as they.

Come, gather round me, little ones,
And as I sit me down,

With shouts of laughter on me place
A mimic regal crown.

Say, childless king, would I accept
Your armies and domain,

Or e'en your crown, and never feel
These tiny hands again?

Look at my crown, and then at yours;
Look in my heart and thine;

How do our jewels now compare—
The earthly and divine?

Hold up your diamonds to the light,
Emerald and amethyst;

They're nothing to those love-lit eyes,
These lips so often kissed!

Oh, noblest Roman of them all,
That mother, good and wise,

Who pointed to her little ones,
The jewels of her eyes—

Four sparkle in my own to-day,
Two deck a sinless brow:

How grow my riches at the thought
Of those in glory now!

And yet no rood of all the earth,
No ships upon the sea,

Nor treasures rare, nor gold, nor gems,
Are safely kept for me:

Still I am rich—myself a king!
And here is my domain,

Which only God shall take away
To give me back again!

A. D. F. R.

EDINBURGH SALISBURY ARCHERS—THE SILVER ARROW.—This, the most coveted of the club's honours, was presented to the club by an old member upwards of thirty years ago, and has been annually competed for ever since. The winner has the honour of affixing a medal to it, with his name and year engraved, so that it becomes a silent recorder of the best shots of the club. The competition for it always draws a good "field;" and this year there was a smart contest on the club's private ground, in Fettes Row Park, on Saturday evening the 15th ult. The varying probability as to who should be the winner was keenly watched while each man shot his twelve dozen arrows; and at the conclusion, after "weighing" previous winners, the arrow for 1865 was adjudged to Mr. J. Duncan Smith, captain of the club.

A LION KEEPER'S ADVENTURE.—The *Journal de Loire* states that a female elephant, Miss Fanny, belonging to Schmidt's menagerie, which is being exhibited at Saumur, has just died. She was said to be aged 130 years. An alarming scene has just taken place during an exhibition at the same establishment. M. Schmidt was in a cage with a lion and a hyena, and after putting those animals through their performances, was feeding them with pieces of fresh meat. The lion, however, became excited by the odour of the flesh, and springing on the hyena, overturned it on the floor of the cage, and seized it by the neck. M. Schmidt first endeavoured to make the lion loose its hold by striking it with his whip, and then by firing close to the animal's ears a revolver which had been handed to him. The lion did not, however, relax its grasp, while the hyena lay apparently lifeless. A great excitement now prevailed among the spectators, and fears were entertained for the tamer himself. An iron bar was next handed to M. Schmidt, who succeeded in thrusting it far into

the lion's jaws, while the animal was beaten with pieces of wood passed through the bars by the keepers. The lion at length loosed his hold of the hyena, and turned to make a dash at the bars against his new assailants, while M. Schmidt, taking advantage of the moment, dragged the hyena to the other end of the cage, and a trap being immediately let down, separated the two animals. M. Schmidt accompanied the wounded animal, and shortly after came forward before the spectators and was received with loud applause. The hyena was seriously injured, but there are hopes that its life will be saved.

THE HEIRESS.

CHAPTER IV.

ALIVE.

Better far is opportunity,
Seized at the lucky hour, than all the counsels
Which wisdom dictates, or which craft inspires.

Franklin.

On the morning following the visit of David Drew to the poor-house, a gentleman, attired in morning gown and slippers, sauntered slowly from his own apartments at one end of that grim building, toward the sick ward of the establishment.

He was in no haste to reach his destination, as he had been in no haste to rise, or to finish his late breakfast.

Dr. Rawdon was never in a hurry; never seemingly much moved or interested in anything.

He was a heavily built man, with small black eyes, and a well-shaven double chin, and had probably reached the age of forty-five.

Passing a clock upon the staircase, he took out his watch and looked at it.

It was half-past nine o'clock, the minute hands touched the sign of the half-hour in both time-pieces, as he turned the handle of the door at the further end of the hall.

It was a long room, with a recess at one end.

Narrow beds, covered with blue check, were ranged along it, and in half-a-dozen of them lay sick paupers. The doctor sauntered along, feeling the pulses and examining the tongues of his patients.

To one old man he said:

"You'll do now—you shall have some wine to-day, to strengthen you."

To the next he said nothing; he lay asleep. The third, still another old man, was surveyed with a sort of cool disgust.

"You'll get up to-day, take your place, and go to sweeping," he said. "I told you before that I suspected you had been drinking on the day you were let out to see your grand-daughter, and I know it now."

And he sauntered on, deaf to the old man's refutation of the charge.

"Any new patients in the women's ward?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Then I'll not go in. Old age can't be cured, and that's all that ails Nelly Cragan. How's her appetite?"

"Wonderful, sir."

"She'll live a year or so yet, I shouldn't wonder. Oh! how about the dead baby? I must see that, of course."

The woman arose and led the way. He followed.

Through the women's ward, where old Nelly Cragan lay dying of old age alone, the two comfortable visitors passed to the further end, where something lay under the blankets of the bed.

The doctor turned sharply.

"I thought you had more sense, Mrs. Mills," he said. "What was your motive for covering a dead child with warm blankets?"

Mrs. Mills looked confused.

"It seemed so little and lonely," she said, "I felt as though it were asleep. It was silly, I know, but I couldn't get it out of my head that it could feel cold."

The doctor made no remark. He lifted the little creature from its nest, and examined it, first as a sort of form, next with some interest. At last he laid the child in bed and re-covered it.

"On the whole you have done the best thing possible, Mrs. Mills, he said. "The child is alive."

"Alive! Oh, doctor!"

"I don't say it will live," said the doctor, "but it may. It is in a stupor, either consequent on convulsions, or some narcotic. In the latter case I will tell you what to do; in the former you can do nothing."

He gave some directions, in his usual placid voice, to the attentive nurse, bade her come to him in an hour, to tell him the result of her efforts, and sauntered away, stopping only to ask old Nelly Cragan some questions, which set her garrulously chattering

about herself, and leaving the room while she was still talking.

Then his morning's work being over, unless something new transpired, the doctor returned to his own snug little parlour.

It was nearly eleven when a rap came at the door. It was Mrs. Mills.

"Well!" said the doctor.

"About the child, sir?"

"Oh, yes—sit down. Dead, I suppose?"

"No, sir. I applied the remedies and did all as you directed; and the little dear has been brought back to life again by them. It took some milk five minutes ago, and its eyes are wide open. It's a very fine baby, indeed, sir. How any mother could have had the heart to use it so I can't think."

"Women have the heart to do anything, I believe," muttered the doctor. "I hope this boy will remember what he owes to one of them."

"What did you say, sir?" asked the housekeeper.

"Nothing."

"There, there," continued the doctor, after a pause, "your patients will need you, Mrs. Mills. If the child needs waiting on, have one of the old women up to help you. Ann Hogan would be the best—the least likely, I think, to drop it into the fire. Good morning, Mrs. Mills."

And the nurse retired, too well used to the doctor's ways to feel hurt at this summary dismissal.

On the way up, she called to Ann Hogan, who was resting from a window in the hall at some workmen repairing the fence without, and installed her in her post, to the envy of her companions.

The baby was numbered from that moment amongst the regular inmates of the poor-house.

Old Davy Drew might well say that Satan had been abroad in the storm that bitter night.

The heir of all Shelbourne's wild lands and full coffers lay upon the knee of a poor-house nurse, and the child rescued by the watchman from a watery grave, deserted by an unknown mother—the child of misery, perhaps of shame—occupied its position in its father's home and heart.

CHAPTER V.

THE FATHER'S DEPARTURE.

And thus the heart will break,
Yet brokenly live on. Childe Harold.

SQUIRE SHELBOURNE lived. The time came when he awoke, and trod once more the desolate halls of his homestead, when the soft spring air tempted him into the garden, or out into the woods, which lay beyond the village; but nothing comforted him, nothing interested him.

All his walks ended at the graveyard, beside his young wife's tomb. All his thoughts went thither, even when his feet remained within his own parlour—lonely now to him as a desert.

Day or night it was the same. His love had been very strong; his hopes for the future many. It was impossible for him to forget for one moment in that house, so haunted by a thousand memories.

His physician grew alarmed. At last he told him plainly that he must change the scene or die.

Walter Shelbourne did not care to live, but he felt it his duty to prolong his life for his child's sake.

He accepted the doctor's mandate.

He chose for his destination, by advice, the West Indies; and made arrangements for departure much as one might make those for a funeral, and with none of the eager interest of one bound upon a pleasant journey.

When they were completed, he went, for the first time in three days, into the nursery, and sat down beside the child's cradle.

Grace was knitting small, snow-white socks for the child, just a year old that day. She said "good morning," and was silent. Somehow she always seemed alarmed and anxious whenever Mr. Shelbourne entered the nursery.

"My boy is asleep?" said the father.

"Yes, sir, baby is asleep."

"He is well?"

"Very well, sir."

"Has any one told you that I am going away tomorrow?"

"Going away, sir? No; I have never seen any child but Deborah. I hadn't heard."

"I am ordered to the West Indies."

"That's a long way, sir. Will you stay long?"

"Perhaps not—perhaps for years. I may die there."

Grace turned pale. She dared not ask the question which was in her mind.

She looked from the baby's crib to Mr. Shelbourne and back again. She ceased to knit and waited.

The next words came from her master.

"I have been thinking of my child. It is, I think, best not to take it with me. You have done well

with my boy; I will leave him in your charge, and here."

"Thank heaven!"

The words burst involuntarily from the old nurse's lips, great drops stood out upon her forehead, and she trembled violently.

"Do you love my child so?" asked Mr. Shelbourne, in a faltering voice. "My poor, motherless boy."

"Oh, sir, I should die if you took him from me! I should die!"

"I am glad you are fond of him. Listen. The house will be partly shut up. The kitchen, this nursery, and a few other rooms will be open, and in use. Deborah will remain here, and yourself; the other servants will be, of course, dismissed. If you are timid, you can have your brother David here when you choose. In case of the child's illness you will summon Dr. Ritchie. Of course, any serious occurrences you will notify me at once. From time to time you will hear from me, and my instructions must be implicitly obeyed."

"Yes, sir; they shall."

"I am sure of it. In case of my death, my sister will become my child's guardian, but if I live I desire that he shall be brought up here. The time may come when I shall return, and be a man again. Just now—"

He paused, stooped over the child, and kissed it. As he did so it awoke.

The little thing was very frail and very fair. It had soft, sweet black eyes, and a mouth like a rosebud. Instead of struggling and crying as most babies do when awakened from a nap, it smiled and cried merrily.

The father's heart was melted.

Hitherto the love for his dead wife had absorbed every emotion save that of duty. For the first time he had kissed it; now he folded it against his breast, and wept.

"My darling! my darling! it is your child!" he said; "the child of our love! God bless it! God make it happier than its father! Good-by, little one, good-by! I may never see you again. I wish you could understand me, and answer me. Good-by."

More kisses, more unrestrained tears, and he laid the infant in its crib once more, and held out his thin, white-fingered hand to Grace.

"Be good to the little thing," he said, "and heaven bless you!" and passed out of the nursery into the wide hall, shutting the door softly behind him.

At six that evening he left the house. As the carriage drove away the two old servants stood at the hall door.

"He's gone," said Deborah, "and the Lord only knows whether he'll ever come back again," and she wiped the tears from her eyes as she spoke.

"Ay, he's gone," repeated Grace, but her tone was one of satisfaction, scarcely repressed.

Five minutes after she was alone in the nursery, crouched down beside the cradle.

"A little while longer," she whispered; "a little while longer. I can draw a free breath. The secret is safe until he comes back—at least, unless I die. I've no one to dread but Deborah; and who would be afraid of her? Safe for awhile—safe, safe—even Davy does not know it yet!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE DOCTOR'S PET.

That heart is hard in nature, and unfeeling
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship, that is not pleased
At sight of innocence enjoying life. Cooper.

YEARS pass as quickly in the poor-house as in other places. The life at that of Carltonville had rolled on through the twelve months much as usual.

Some of the old paupers were dead. The youngest and heartiest, so said the older ones who remained.

Oddly enough, Nelly Cragan was among the living. Doctors are not infallible.

Dr. Rawdon prided himself much on his power of drawing a diagnosis. This time he had been set at nought by an old woman, who had not died of old age, when he said she should.

Nelly Cragan ate and chattered as she had a year before, though she lay, for the most part, on her bed, and complained continually of "rheumatics in her back," which the doctor declared was nothing but the "pains of old age."

There were two other foundlings and a little orphan amongst the children; and the child David Drew brought to the door, as he believed, dead, upon that stormy night, a year ago, was considered one of the older ones.

By virtue of this year of life, he was beginning to take care of himself. A lusty child, large of limb and rosy, he could already walk.

He was able to approach the fender which guarded

the hot stove, and learn, by experience, that it burnt his fingers.

He was permitted to teach himself much as Adam, had he come into this world a child, must have commenced his self-education.

In three years petted babes fail to learn as much of the danger of fire and water, and high places, and sharp implements, as this poor-house child in one.

He had been burnt on the elbow; nearly drowned in a wash-tub; scissors had penetrated his soft fingers; he had tumbled downstairs and out of a window—luckily one on the first floor.

Being a very sagacious baby, he had finally learned to take care of himself.

One thing however was evident, the child had no idea of the deference due to his superiors.

Had he occupied his lawful position in the world, and been the petted heir of Mr. Shelburne, he could not have conducted himself with more independence.

The doctor—that mighty power to whom nurses cursed, and paupers bobbed their heads deferentially—that individual to whose skirts no other pauper baby dared cling, was the object of his preference.

Every day, escaping easily enough from the blinking eyes which kept watch over the pauper children, this particular one waddled down the hall, backed down the stairs at the end, and standing with his back toward the doctor's door, would give it three or four slow thumps with all the power of its little frame.

It as often happened that the door was a little ajar, it opened easily in this way, and baby waddled into the sanctum.

At first the slow, moving head of the stout doctor would turn toward the intruder with surprise.

An impulse to call some one to take the child away came naturally enough; but while considering it the baby would complete his stratagem by barking against the door to shut it, and waddling towards him, would remark, in the language peculiar to his time of life:

"Ugh! Dot, wa wa ee."

What was meant the doctor could not tell.

Then relinquishing his wish to be rid of his visitor, the doctor would placidly watch the child—permit its approach—let it sit down on the floor at his feet, and say nothing until visions of gruel, or bread and milk floating through the child's brain, made him manifest his anxiety to be gone. Then the doctor would arise and let his visitor out, still never speaking.

Soon he began to expect the baby's coming—to listen to the patter in the hall—to open the door if it were closed, to respond to the unintelligible

"Ugh! Dot, wa wa ee."

One day he brought sugar-plums with a special view to his morning caller, and fed him with an odd pleasure.

At last a curiosity to know what the child's speech meant got the better of him, and he made a special errand to the nursery.

Baby in particular was investigating the ashes on the stone earth.

Babies in general were bawling, tumbling down, being washed and sleeping.

The woman in charge rubbed a chair with her apron, and offered it to the doctor.

At that the young gentleman in the ashes lifted his head around, and ejaculated, as usual:

"Ugh! Dot, wa wa ee," and came forward.

"What is he saying?" asked the doctor, glad to come at the answer without appearing to be anxious on the subject.

"Why, don't you know?" asked the old woman. "It's as plain as print. He's saying what you say yourself, doctor, to us, only he puts it in your name. 'Ugh! Dot, wa, wa ee'—that's, 'Well, doctor, how are we?' He, he, he?"

The doctor made no answer. He did not betray himself, musingly. "Certainly no lady," and as though loath to destroy the pretty envelope, he opened it daintily with his knife, at one end.

The letter was as follows:

Edinburgh, Feb. 18.

"MR. HARVEY GRIER.—DEAR SIR.—We require your services in a matter of extreme delicacy and importance. Those services, to further the end required, must be entirely confidential. When you have heard what they are you will think of many reasons why publicity must be avoided.

"Enclosed you will find a small fee, which will assure you of our sincerity. Any further demands will be promptly complied with, no matter how great they may be.

"A year and three months ago, on the night of December—th, at or about twelve o'clock, during a terrible storm of snow and hail, the watchman of the place saved a young woman from committing suicide on the wharf of Carltonville. A short time afterwards she contrived to escape from his custody, leaving however a young infant in his arms.

"It is presumed that the watchman conveyed the child to the poor-house. He may, however, have given it in charge of some other authorities, or to some pri-

vate individual. In so small a place the truth will not be difficult to discover.

"We desire to know (if it lives) the condition and whereabouts of that infant. Once ascertaining its existence, we are willing to do anything possible to restore it to its legal guardians one who will be perhaps the wealthiest individual in all Scotland on attaining majority. At present real names cannot be mentioned. All communications must be addressed to 'Anxiety,' post restante, Edinburgh. Yours respectfully,

The lawyer perused the letter twice, feeling a little injured at the want of confidence displayed by the concealment of the real name of the person who addressed him, and very much interested in the mystery just opening before him.

Soon turning to the desk near by, he selected note-paper and envelope, wrote a brief answer, directed it, and summoned Tom, his office boy, from the back room, where he was engaged in cleaning an inkstand.

"Take this to the post-office," he said, "and don't stop to stare into windows; it must go by the night mail."

The letters which he had retained he locked up safely in one compartment behind the black walnut door, which guarded sundry pigeon-holes; the letter from Edinburgh being distinguished as of peculiar importance by being secured in a separate division, which opened with a spring.

After these precautions were completed he left the place, and descended the long stairs, leaving Master Tom on his return to close up the office.

Had the habits of this young gentleman been known to his employer, he would have been more solicitous as to the security of his private correspondence.

Returning to get the lawyer gone, Master Burridge cut a paper, whistled, expressed himself overjoyed to find the coast clear, and at once hung the porcelain slate on the door, locked it, and proceeded to heap the stove with new coals, and to draw the lawyer's own leather-covered chair before it.

After this he rammaged the room until he discovered several fragments of cigars, and coolly taking a number of old keys from his pockets, unlocked the rosewood desk—not to abstract anything of value, but simply to gratify his curiosity, and to amuse himself by an operation which he termed "playing Paul."

Smoking and reading with the gravity of a judge, Master Tom possessed himself of the contents of the letters rapidly, and was replacing them when he thought him of the spring drawer.

Within it lay one letter—that with the green seal, with a star upon it, and postmarked Edinburgh.

Master Tom, remarking that "this was from a gal," treated it as he had the others, and found a fund of reflection in its contents.

"It's like a play," he said. "Lord, don't I wish I was that young un! The richest person in Scotland on maintaining his majority! Ah, don't that sound splendid! He's such a jolly time before him! Such a little chap, too! What cigars he can smoke, and what pins he can wear! He'll never have to clean inkstands and run errands, he won't. That is if he's alive."

And Master Tom returned the letter, locked up the desk, and finished his cigar ends.

In half an hour thereafter they had produced their usual effect, and Tom Burridge was lying very ill upon the floor of the office.

He had been trying to learn to smoke for three months, and was convinced that he should never succeed until he had a box of real Havanas of his own and a week's holiday to practice.

At six or thereabouts a very pale boy went home upon the top of the omnibus, to tell his anxious mother that the pickles she had put up with his lunch had not agreed with him.

(To be continued.)

THE bronze manufacturers of Paris, who enjoy a world-wide reputation, have resolved to give prizes for which their workmen may compete. They propose to give £32 for sculptured work of art; a similar sum for a sculptured ornament; £64 for the best chiselled work; £20 for the best drawing; £24 to the founder who shall turn out the best work; £16 to the best turner; and £12 to the best fitter. This bit of liberality would be worthy of imitation by some of our English manufacturers who wish to progress themselves, and remember that the drop of water lifts the ton of the hydraulic press.

THE oldest of the parties who were engaged in the Boulogne conspiracy of 1840, Etienne Laborde, died on Sunday, aged 84, in the Palace of Luxembourg, of which he was the Military Governor. Laborde entered the service in 1804, went through the German and Russian campaigns, in which he was twice severely wounded. He accompanied Napoleon to Elba in 1814, returned with him to France, and was present at Waterloo. He was placed on half-pay on the Restoration. He returned, however, to active

service after the Revolution of 1830, and made the campaign of Belgium. In 1834 he was named Commandant de Place at Cambrai, but was placed on the retired list in 1838. Known to be warmly attached to the Bonapartist cause, he was readily admitted as one of those appointed to execute the plot of 1840. He was arrested with the rest of the conspirators at Boulogne, and tried by the Chamber of Peers, when he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, which the Government allowed him to complete without difficulty in a *maison de santé* at Châllois. In the "order of the day," issued on board the Edinburgh Castle by Prince Louis Napoleon, allotting their parts to his associates, Laborde was designated as Lieutenant-colonel in command of the artillery of the centre; and in the general instructions he was "charged with the immediate formation of a battalion of volunteers, whom he was to assemble on the Place d'Armes, in front of the Hôtel de Ville of Boulogne."

THE LADY'S PLEA.

CHAPTER I.

THE CARNIVAL.

NAPLES, that beautiful city, rising like the gorgeous dreams of an opium-eater, from the margin of a far-famed bay, presented a scene of the gayest excitement, for the carnival was at its height.

A stranger who had never witnessed the wild freaks of the season would have supposed himself in the midst of a strange masquerade, so novel and striking was the aspect of the city, and its inhabitants.

Brown peasants, muleteers, and fishermen jostled stately knights, grave friars, and tall figures, wearing jewelled crowns, and cloaks lined with ermine; flower girls, and wandering minstrels appeared on an equal footing with a sultana, or a would-be Queen Bee.

Currioli flashed by with almost the speed of wings bearing fantastic masques; all the streets, and especially the Toledo, were crowded with a motley throng; wild shouts and songs echoed out on the passing breeze; Indian jugglers had their booths at every corner; swarthy Bohemians were stationed here and there spinning their fairy-like glass palaces, ships and birds; improvisatores stood leaning over their harps, as they breathed their impassioned songs; fantocini danced to and fro in mimic waltzes, and a grand regatta on the bay added a spirited and imposing feature to the scene.

Bon-bons and *bon-mots* were showered everywhere in lavish profusion, raining down from palace windows, and balconies as well as the dwellings of the poor, and wherever you turned you would have found mirth and mischief—it was indeed,

"The maddest, merriest day

of the carnival.

On one of the streets which in years gone by had been inhabited by the better class of Neapolitan society, but was now abandoned to the less fortunate, stood an old, but picturesque structure.

The walls were covered with mould and lichens; the diamond-framed glass of the windows shattered, and the quaint gables draped with ivy, which ever and anon swayed like the long pendants of Spanish moss in a Southern forest.

In a little balcony, so small that it could be scarcely called more than a porch, a beggar girl had been standing daily during the carnival.

Her face was entirely concealed by her grey domino, but her figure was exquisite, her attitude full of careless grace, and a vein of rich pathos trembled through the voice, which murmured:

"Charity, charity!"

Suddenly a tall form, clad in the garb of a Neapolitan fisherman, paused hard by, and watched her intently for some moments.

Then he moved forward, and said:

"My heart would upbraid me should I pass you without giving alms. Take this, and pray the Virgin to be merciful to the giver."

And he placed a Neapolitan coin on the carved stone-work of the balcony. The mendicant bowed, and softly murmured her thanks.

The next instant a handsome currioli came darting by; the pretended fisherman lifted his hand with a sudden movement, and uttered a few words in a foreign tongue.

The vehicle stopped as if it had been riveted to the spot by some wizard power, and seizing the beggar girl in his arms, the stranger bore her to the currioli, muttering:

"On, on with all speed! Obey orders, and you shall not go unrewarded!"

The spirited steed plunged forward with wild fury, and a shout of triumph rose from the fisherman as they sped away.

They were turning into an unfrequented street, so near the water that many of the dwellings overhung

the bay, when a figure sprang forward, and clutching the reins with a powerful grasp, brought the currioli to a stand. At the same moment a deep-toned voice exclaimed:

"Stop, stop! Release that lady!"

"What, what means this?" cried the fisherman; "who presumes to interfere with me in my love making? I know there is a beautiful face behind that domino, and shall carry off the prize, in spite of you!"

"Stand back, stand back, or we will trample you down—clear the way, if you would save trouble!"

"I do not fear your threats or your power!" rejoined the stranger. "I am bent on releasing this girl!"

"Save me! Oh, save me!" exclaimed the beggar.

"By all you hold sacred, I implore you to save me!"

"Take heart, I will."

And quick as thought, the young man had snatched her from the currioli, while the terrified horse darted madly on, till the fisherman and his companion were thrown on the ground, half stunned by the fall.

Leaving them to their fate, we will follow the fortunes of the beggar girl and her deliverer.

As I have said before, the streets were crowded, but as fast as possible he forced a passage through the throng. Sometimes the people involuntarily surged back, like tumultuous waves, and sometimes it would require all his authority to make any progress.

At length he reached the margin of the bay; the regatta had ended, but boats were skimming across the water, and to a solitary boatman rowing one of these he beckoned.

Like a bird on the wing, the skiff danced toward him, and ere long the boatman had resigned it to him.

As he bent to the oars, the girl sank down beside him, and her domino falling off, revealed a face whose beauty he had never seen equalled.

The large dark eyes, with their drooping lids and heavy lashes, the faultless features, the changing colour, the dusky hair sweeping about her like a veil, the half parted lips—all, all formed a picture he was not soon to forget. Giuseppe Rossignol had met his fate!

For a moment she gazed up at him, her eyes kindling through her tears, and then said:

"Signor, you have kept your word—you have saved me! How much I owe you, and how deeply grateful I am, I can never, never tell you, but I shall pray for your happiness to my dying day. Who—who are you?"

It was with considerable hesitancy that he replied:

"Call me Giuseppe Rossignol, lady, and now, let me ask a similar favour of you. Whom have I rescued from the lawless wretch? Do not fear to trust me though the carnival is almost over—I will not betray your secret!"

"Oh! signor," and a painful blush crimsoned her face—"it is not a mere disguise as you fancy, worn through this wild merriment, and put off then! I am forced to beg, though my whole soul revolts against it!"

"Heaven pity you as I do!" was the fervent response, and the two lapsed into silence.

Meanwhile on, on danced the boat, impelled by that stalwart rower—on, on till they reached the beautiful island of Capri. The sunset had come and gone with its Italian glory, the twilight purple had faded from the atmosphere, and the white splendour of the moonlight bathed the waves and that fair isle of the sea.

"Here," exclaimed Rossignol, energetically, "I believe you will be safe from beggary, from persecution, as long as you wish to remain."

"A thousand thanks, signor," and the tears once more gathered in her eyes. Her deliverer lifted her from the boat and led her across the yellow sands with as much courtesy as if she had been a princess.

"Lady," he finally said; "of course, it was not a real fisherman who snatched you from the balcony today."

"No, no, the fisherman's garb was no doubt assumed simply as a disguise, to be laid aside at will."

"Have you any idea who the villain is?"

The girl shook her head, and he went on:

"I believe I know, lady; the circumstances of my life have combined to make me suspicious, watchful, keen-sighted, and it requires a skilful disguise to deceive me."

"And who is he?" and the maiden lifted her eyes to Rossignol's face.

"I think I had better not tell you till I am certain my suspicions are well grounded, but if I mistake not, a man of high rank assumed this costume, and selected the time of the carnival as affording a good opportunity to secure you."

Agnese trembled, and clung more closely to her protector's arm, and he continued:

"On the morrow I will go to Naples, and endeavour to ascertain the truth, and I trust you will not be lonely during your stay at Capri."

"Nay, there is no fear of that," responded the girl, casting an admiring gaze on the beautiful scenery around her.

How fair the isle looked, with its picturesque mountains, its green valley, its vineyards, and olive-trees bathed in the mellow moonlight, while the waters of the bay broke softly against the shore.

At the door of a fanciful cottage, overrun with vines, among whose glossy leaves rich clusters of berries glowed like rubies, Rossignol paused, and gave a peculiar rap.

The door was immediately opened by a bright-eyed lad, who exclaimed:

"Good evening, you are back earlier than we expected."

By this time a tall, dark man, with a broad, expansive brow, and clear, intelligent eyes rose and advanced to meet Rossignol, using similar language to that which the boy had employed.

"Ah!" said Rossignol, "I had nothing to keep me in Naples to-night, but much to bring me home."

The two men exchanged significant glances, and then the new comer continued:

"Andrea Carreni, the islanders say nobody in real distress who asked help at your hands was ever turned away unaided."

"It is true," interposed a voice within. "Andrea spends more than half his living on the poor."

"Well, I have brought a new claimant to your door."

"What—what has happened?"

"To-day, during the mad freaks of the carnival, I was standing in one of the streets in yonder city, when a currioli came darting by. In it sat a person dressed as a fisherman, and another, disguised as a muleteer, was guiding the horse, and between them I perceived this girl. Her wild shrieks and gestures soon told me how terrified and indignant she was, and I resolved to release her. Pressing through the crowd, I stopped the vehicle, and in spite of threats and curses, snatched her from her captor."

"A bold but a noble act," cried Carreni, "but I will not interrupt you—go on with your story."

"After I had unloosed my grasp of the bridle rein, the steed plunged furiously away, and was lost to sight amid the multitude. What could I do? I had no friends in the city, and therefore I rowed her across the bay to Capri, resolving to ask your protection for the young stranger. At first, I supposed her to be in disguise like the rest of the masqueraders, but she declares she is doomed to beggary."

A long shudder crept over the girl's frame; her cheeks flushed as if a plague spot had risen there, and scalding tears rose to her eyes.

"Poor child," murmured Carreni, and the words were echoed by his wife, and joining the group she grasped the beggar's hand, and added:

"Welcome, thrice welcome—at Capri I hope you will find rest, peace, and plenty."

CHAPTER II.

FIRST LOVE. SHADOWS. THE CARBONARI.

Two months passed, and Agnese was still an inmate of Andrea Carreni's home. To a casual observer the island of Capri is always a delightful spot, but to her it seemed a paradise.

The sky which arched above it was bluer and more serene than elsewhere, the mountains wore a richer haze, and though she spent the winter in Carreni's cottage, an eternal summer appeared to reign in her heart.

As the Italian spring time approached, she stood one evening with Giuseppe Rossignol, watching the moon rise.

There was not a cloud above; the air was heavy with perfume, drifting by in sudden wafts, and the waters rippled gently over the sands.

Up, up, up, floated the moon, like a love-lighted barque gilding out into the deep blue of the Indian sea, or set afloat by some superstitious girl on the sacred Ganges, and for a while the two gazed in silence, but at length Rossignol murmured:

"Agnese, you have taught me what love is; heretofore I have been living in the midst of stern realities, but since I snatched you from the currioli the last day of the carnival, my life's romance has begun."

The girl blushed, and every nerve of her frame thrilled with wild joy, but she did not speak, and he continued:

"In my visits to the city I have learned that my suspicions were correct; the pretended fisherman is a cavalier of noble birth and high in favour at the Neapolitan court, and what is more, his bold deed was no freak of the carnival, but the carrying out of a fixed plan. It seems he had seen you begging in the Toledo

and many of the principal squares frequented by the rich, and had fallen desperately in love with you."

"Strange, strange, that he should care for a poor beggar girl like me," said the maiden, gravely.

"I do not wonder at his admiration, at his love," rejoined the young man, "for when your domino fell off, I thought I had never beheld such beauty, and daily since your stay at Capri my interest has increased, till it has deepened into love. Agnese, if I could know it had met with even a slight return, I should be indescribably happy."

"Giuseppe Rossignol, I am not worthy of you—I see it, I feel it to my heart's core, and yet you are dearer to me than all the world beside."

"Since I have that assurance I care not if you love me. I would not exchange places with any man in the universe when you are mine, Agnese," and he drew her to his heart and gazed down at her with womanly tenderness shining in his eagle eye. For an instant Agnese rested there, but then she drew back, exclaiming :

"Giuseppe, I can never, never be yours."

"And why? shall a false sense of your own degradation separate us?"

"Not that alone, another barrier rises between us. I should deem it a great wrong to marry you unless I could give you my fullest confidence, and—*I cannot, I dare not do it!*"

"Why—oh why?"

"My lips are sealed. I am bound by a solemn oath not to breathe the secrets of my history."

"Agnese, Agnese, I cannot give you up. I love you, I trust you—can you not confide all to me?"

The girl turned abruptly from him, and paced the shore for some time in deep thought.

"Giuseppe," she at length murmured, and he sprang to her side.

"In yonder city," she continued, "lives the person who bound me to silence, and my only hope is from him. There can be no danger, if I put on disguise, in going back to Naples and endeavouring to soften his heart, and obtain a release from my vow. If he relents, I will come back to you—if he is obdurate, it is best we should meet no more."

The next morning a boat pushed from Capri, and shot across the bay toward the city. It contained a nun, and two fisher boys, who rowed the little craft, and on reaching the harbour, the Sister of Charity, who was no other than Agnese, took her way back to the old building described in the preceding chapter.

Unlocking the door with the key she drew from the folds of her robe, she ascended the creaking stairs, and moved through room after room, with tattered tapestry hanging from the walls, piles of moth-eaten cushions heaped here and there, windows and mirrors filmy with dust, and everything wearing an air of dilapidation and neglect.

Finally she entered a large, dim apartment more comfortable, if possible, than the rest, with a single antique chair, a pallet of straw, a small table, and a huge chest on which stood a brown water jar, and a tray, with a bit of dry bread, a cluster of mouldy grapes, and two or three half ripe figs, which she knew sold at a low price at the fruit stalls.

"He must have gone," muttered Agnese; "can it be he is dead?"

As she spoke, the drapery was thrown back from the miserable pallet to which I have before alluded, and an old man raised his head from the rude pillow as if re-animated by the sound of a human voice, and fixed his keen eyes upon her.

"Ah, here you are!" he cried. "I wonder how you dare venture into my presence when you have left me to drag on alone ever since the carnival. Begone, begone!"

"Not yet, not yet," faltered the poor girl, sinking down before him. "I must first tell you what errand brought me back to Naples."

And she proceeded to relate the circumstances which are already familiar to our readers, her father listening with keen interest.

"And now," she exclaimed, "I have come to soften your heart. I would fain see if it is as I have feared—transformed into stone. For five years my life has been a bitter mockery—in Venice, in Rome, in Milan, and now in Naples, I have been acting a falsehood!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed her father. "I tell you, I am poor!"

"No, no, that too is false! If you were needy, I would toil for you early and late, or beg from door to door, but as it is, my whole soul revolts against it. Can you, with a father's heart, doom me to such wrong, such injustice? Will you not at least unsay my lips? You are growing old, father; you cannot live long—how can you meet my mother in the world beyond the grave—how can you find peace in the land of spirits, unless your cold, miserly nature loosens its grasp of the gold which stands between you and heaven?"

Benito buried his face in his hands, but he made no reply, and with a wild cry the girl left him.

Like one in a painful dream, she descended the staircase, and sat down faint and giddy in the dim vestibule.

How long she remained there she could not have told; but at length she heard a feeble voice calling :

"Agnese, Agnese! Fly—oh, fly to me, my child!"

The next instant she was again traversing the dismal suite of rooms I have described, and in a moment more stood in his presence.

There was a feverish glow on the thin cheek, and his eyes had lost their cold and strong gleam.

"What would you with me?" asked the girl, sinking at his side and endeavouring to interpret the change in his countenance.

"You have conquered, Agnese. A father's heart beats warmly for you once more. Not more than an hour has passed since you left me, but yet an age of thought, of feeling, of reproach, have been crowded into it. I release you from your promise, your lips are unsealed, your toll is over. There, there, eternity is not far before me, and I may not live till dawn, but I trust I shall receive forgiveness from you, and the great Father above!"

With these words he sank upon the low pallet, and through the night the young girl kept a patient vigil. When the morning dawned, flushing the waters, and gilding palace, turrets, and cross crowned spires, Giorgone Benito was dead.

The day of his death, Murat, then King of Naples, was sitting in a private audience chamber, to which he had retired after the more formal business of the court had been transacted. Notwithstanding his plebeian birth, there was something most attracting in his handsome and spirited face, and his bearing was far more princely than that of many who boast of royal lineage.

He was leaning back in a chair of state, cushioned and canopied with purple velvet, when a page entered and sank upon his knees before his master.

"What do you wish, Jean?" asked the king.

"A gentleman desires an audience."

"Did he give his name?"

"It is the Count Rouget."

"Why, you must be a new page, Jean, or you would know we always admit him. Ho, there, enter!"

A voluminous curtain was swept back, and the count walked in with the air of one quite at home.

"Sire," he exclaimed, when the two had exchanged greetings, "I have something important to communicate with regard to a secret society, styled the 'European Patriots.'"

"Ah! say you so?" and Murat's face grew still graver—"we tried to win over the carbonari to allegiance, but to no purpose; they only submitted to our authority in the hope of making Italy independent through us. Sit down, and let us discuss the affair, Count Rouget."

"Well, sire," rejoined the count, "you recollect how the courtiers have rallied me on my perchant for the beautiful beggar girl, Agnese, whom I first met wandering along the Toledo?"

The king nodded assent, and the count continued to tell how he had planned to carry off the prize in the garb of a fisherman, and amid the sports of the carnival; how his plot had been thwarted, and the girl kept the whole winter where it was impossible for him to find a clue to her retreat, adding that he had only found her at last on her return to the city, to visit her father.

"Yesterday," exclaimed Rouget, "she was garbed as a Sister of Charity, but I knew her faultless figure, the airy grace of her movements, and the dark splendour of her eyes, of which I caught a casual glimpse. Since she came to Naples we have tracked her deliverer to the island of Capri, where he has been living with a brother of the secret league, known as the 'European Patriots,' and both are under assumed names."

"And who are they in reality?"

"Ferraro and Chiaro—men whom every king has cause to fear! From Capri they occasionally come to the city to hold secret meetings in a place just discovered by the minister of police, and then row back to cultivate a few vineyards, lawlessly bring down the bishop's quails, or ply the fisherman's calling on the bay. Sire, you will of course order the arrest of your own enemies, and him, who as they tell me, won the heart of the beautiful Agnese."

"Yes, yes."

And Murat kept his promise.

When after her father's burial Agnese once more trod the fair island which had seemed like enchanted ground to her, she found the cottage deserted, and no trace of friends from whom she had received such constant sympathy.

In answer to her eager enquiries a Neapolitan woman, who sat gathering curious pebbles and shells on the beach, assured her that Carreni's family had been taken to the city in irons, and were to be thrown into prison.

Gradually the truth dawned upon her that the villain who had snatched her from the balcony during the carnival, had found her hiding-place and procured their arrest.

She was a girl of quick impulses, and hurrying to the royal palace she succeeded in gaining admittance.

Queen Caroline was alone, for it was late, and she had dismissed her throng-women, and sat wrapped in her gorgeous dressing-gown, thinking on the strange vicissitudes which had made her husband King of Naples.

Suddenly the gilded door swung open, a footfall pattered across the mosaic floor, and a slight figure knelt on the velvet foot-cloth before her.

"Noble lady," said a low, sweet voice, "do not chide me for my presumption. If he whom you love with all the depth and fervour of your being had been arrested during your absence, and might perhaps be doomed to death, you would risk your life as I do mine to-night. Pray for what offence are Giuseppe Rossignol and Andrea Carreni in irons?"

"They have been accused of being members of a secret league styled the 'European Patriots' who are attempting to overthrow the Government."

"And who is their accuser?"

"The Count Rouget."

"Heaven help them then!" exclaimed the girl, for she suspected him to be the pretended fisherman, and with an eloquence of which it is impossible to give the faintest idea, she made her plea.

Queen Caroline listened with no little emotion, and gave her promise to appeal to the king, and breathing more freely, the girl walked away.

As she re-entered the lonely house, where her father had dwelt, a familiar voice murmured :

"Agnese," and she looked up into the noble face of her lover.

When she related her story, he drew her to him in a convulsive embrace, and exclaimed :

"I am one of a secret league of patriots, and have been obliged to bear an assumed name, but even in the royal household we had friends, and a page apprised us of our danger. We had fled before the officers arrived, while a family of neighbours took possession of the house, and passed themselves off as the prisoners for whom Murat had sent. A vessel bound for England is to sail to-night, and there we hope to find refuge. Agnese, will you be mine—an obstacle removed?"

The girl placed her hand in his, and thus he was answered, and an hour later their marriage rites were privately solemnized.

That day the fugitives remained concealed in Benito's dilapidated, old mansion, but when midnight again settled over Naples, they were sailing over the beautiful bay on their voyage to the "land of the free, and the home of the brave," and here the refugees found prosperity and peace.

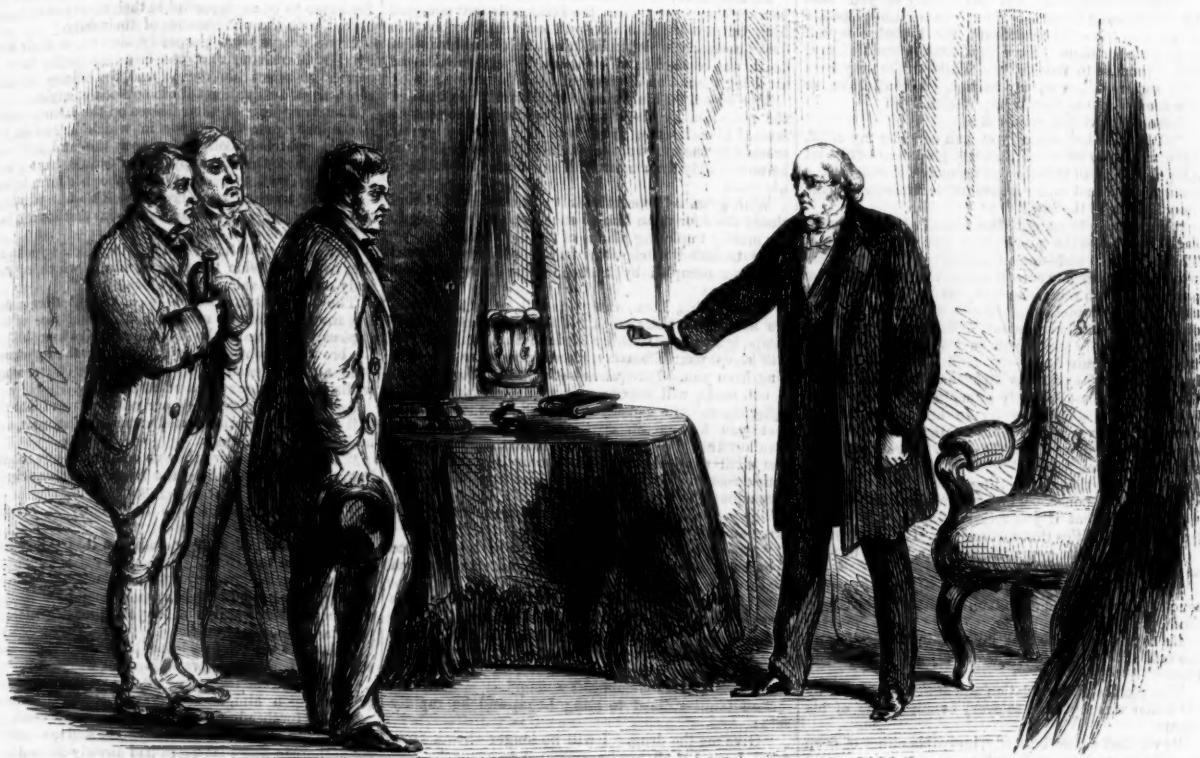
C. F. G.

The distribution of the prize money for the capture of Lucknow, in 1858, commenced at Cheltenham Hospital, on the 21st ult., and will continue every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, until the whole amount in the hands of the commissioners of the hospital is claimed.

The youngest son of General Garibaldi, who accompanied his father to England last year, has arrived, and will remain in England about six months, under the care of Colonel Chambers, and will during that period study civil engineering under a distinguished engineer.

A STEAM-BOAT BUILT BY ONE MAN.—There may now be seen in the Basin de l'Arsenal, near the Place de la Bastille, a small steam-boat, the history of which is curious. This vessel, which is upwards of seventy-five feet long by nine feet wide, was built on the heights of Belleville, more than five-eighths of a mile from the basin of Pantin, it which it was ultimately launched; and what is the most surprising part of the affair, was constructed by one who acted as his own engineer, draughtsman, founder, carpenter, &c., and who, although brought up as a journeyman jeweller, appears to be a mechanician by instinct. There is something extraordinary in the fact that a single man should have been able to fashion out by himself, and without the slightest assistance from any one, the different parts of this boat, and put them together; but the wonder is increased when it is considered that the boat, which, when on the stocks, weighed 5,000 kilogrammes (a French kilogramme is about five pounds five and a half drams avoirdupois), and 7,000 comprising the cradle, was removed to the basin of Pantin on a kind of wheeled truck, contrived by this exceedingly ingenious mechanic in such a manner as to surmount all the difficulties he might meet with, such as inequalities of ground, turns in the road, &c. The removal was effected without any difficulty, and the boat launched into the basin of Pantin, where it now lies.

The **man** **men** **A** **sach** **his** **was** **been** **his** **a** **arre** **It** **hot** **add** **T** **the** **"** **be** **from** **mig** **either** **adv** **"** **step**



EVA ASHLEY.

CHAPTER X.
THE POTION.

He remained silent, with his head sunk upon his breast, and his father sat watching him with such a chaos of wretchedness imprisoned in his proud heart, that the most insensible must have pitied him.

Squire Ashley had cast off his elder child for disobedience, and centred all his hopes in his handsome and attractive son, who he fondly hoped was to be the prop of his old age and the inheritor of his stainless name.

On the score of family pride, the old man was almost a monomaniac, and to preserve his escutcheon pure, he believed himself capable of making any personal sacrifice.

He was working himself up now to that point at which he would recklessly burden his life with a weight which he felt must destroy him, as surely as if slow poison had been infused in his system.

His heart might break, but justice should be done upon the criminal, even if the heavens should fall and crush him for his unnatural act.

He was in deadly earnest in the assertions he made to his son, and he only waited for some additional confirmation of the crime of which he accused Leon to pronounce upon him the fatal sentence of death.

The next two hours were spent in so terrible a manner as to leave their impress for ever upon the two men thus placed in deadly antagonism to each other.

At intervals Leon passionately remonstrated against such treatment, and implored to be left free to make his escape; but to this the squire replied that escape was now impossible, that by this time a watch had been set upon the place, and any effort on the part of his son to leave the house would lead to his instant arrest.

It was near ten o'clock when a messenger came in hot haste to the door of Ashurst, and delivered a note addressed to his master.

The man rode away immediately, leaving no clue to the writer of the following lines:

"SQUIRE ASHLEY.—The pond on Arden Place has been dragged, and the body of Ernest Arden recovered from it with a wound in his side, which of itself might not have proved mortal. While stunned, he either fell into the water, or was thrown in it by his adversary; which happened cannot now be known."

"Suspicion has fastened on your son, and already steps have been taken to obtain a warrant for his arrest.

[SQUIRE ASHLEY'S RECEPTION OF THE OFFICERS.]

"If you are aware of his whereabouts, warn him of his danger, and aid him to get out of the country as soon as possible, for he would have little chance of escape if brought to trial."

A FRIEND.

As the squire comprehended the sense of the lines, all the mercy seemed to die out of his heart. He turned toward his son with an expression of iron determination, and said:

"If I have hitherto wavered, and listened to the promptings of nature, that weakness is now at an end. Leon Ashley, read your death-warrant, for such this letter will prove to you."

He held the page before the eyes of the bound man, which eagerly devoured them. For a moment he seemed crushed by the evil that so nearly approached him, and every shade of colour fled from his features, but he presently said:

"The writer of that shows more consideration for me than you have, for he warns me to fly, while you bind me to my fatal doom, and leave me no chance to save my life."

His father sternly replied:

"What right have I, a sworn servant of justice, to permit so great a criminal as you to escape? I have condemned to death the sons of other men for crimes more venial than those of which you are accused; why then shall I hesitate in your case, when I can compass the ends of justice?" There is now no doubt left in my mind, Leon Ashley, that you were the author of Ernest Arden's death—that yours was the hand which hurled his insensible form into the water."

"In the last you wrong me, sir," said Leon, impulsively. "I acknowledge that we met in the grounds; he challenged me to a personal combat, and I, of course, accepted his defiance. We fought upon the brink of the pond, and Arden must have staggered toward its edge as the shot struck him, for when I recovered sufficiently to look around me he was nowhere to be seen. Once his head arose above the surface of the water, but so far from drowning him, I would have made an effort to save him had it been possible to do so. This is the simple truth, believe it or not, as you may choose."

Squire Ashley seemed to be considering his words, but after a pause, he said:

"It is true, then, that by your hand this young man fell, and you are amenable to the law for his murder. You have no witness to vouch for the truth of what you have just stated, therefore it will avail you little. Before the day is gone the myrmidons of justice will be here to arrest you, yet you speak of the possibility of escape. Do you not see that but one avenue of escape is now open to you?"

"And what is that? I am ready to embrace it," said Leon, eagerly.

"I told you that you must eventually embrace it," replied his father, with solemn emphasis. "You can only evade arrest and punishment by taking your own life; when the officers come hither they must find only the inanimate form from which the spirit has succeeded in effecting its escape."

A cry escaped the lips of the criminal, and he passionately cried out:

"I cannot—I will not take my own life. What would I gain by such a desperate deed as that? It would be better to risk the chances of a trial."

"And bear the infamy, the long imprisonment, the scorn and contempt of all honourable men? Believe me, life will be harder to bear with such degrading terms than to sacrifice it at once. Your doom is sealed, even before your trial takes place, for escape from condemnation is impossible. The double offence of which you have been guilty is of so aggravated a character that no jury could be found to clear you. Therefore, I here solemnly sentence you to expiate your crimes against Ernest Arden and his sister by the voluntary relinquishment of life."

Leon sank back with the sudden conviction that there would be no possibility of evading his sentence—that his father would be as inexorable as fate itself in exacting its fulfilment. His courage began to fail him, and his spirits sank to the lowest level.

Hitherto he had endeavoured to convince himself that his father was only playing on his apprehensions, that he might punish him as severely as possible for his late conduct before permitting him to effect his escape.

That he was in earnest in this solemn doom he would not hitherto believe, but now he comprehended that he was not acting, that he was in fatal earnest; and his abject soul cowered before the shadow that was so rapidly settling over him.

He faintly asked:

"Will you not suffer me to avail myself of such chances as may still exist in my favour? Surely you will allow me to make an effort to save myself."

"It would be useless, Leon, and the attempt would end in something worse for you than an easy and speedy death. Choose your doom now, while the power is yet yours."

"But if I consent to perish thus, what is to become of my wife—or of my child?" asked the prisoner, with a suddenly awakened interest in their fate. "They are dependent on me, and I have pledged myself to Eva to allow her a liberal support from such means as I expected to secure by giving my hand to Grace."

"Such a compact as that was worthy of you," said his father, contemptuously, "but you need not hesitate to give up life on their account, for I pledge myself to provide for them. Save my name from infamy, and I promise to receive the child under my own roof, and rear her as my heiress. I shall have no other on whom to bestow my wealth."

Leon despairingly cried out:

"Oh, my father, since you can consider my child, have mercy on me also. Let me go hence—only let me go, and I will trouble you no more; I will seek a foreign land, and under an assumed name escape the bloodhounds of the law."

"You would be sought after, identified, and brought back to undergo the punishment you have incurred. Think of the wide-spread notoriety the newspapers would give your late acts, the dreadful infamy of the punishment you must eventually undergo—of the humiliating and wretched imprisonment which the scales of life and death hang balancing in the hands of justice. I solemnly assure you that in your case they would not vibrate long—the fatal doom would soon be pronounced, and other lips than mine enunciate the sentence I have already pronounced."

There was a solemn dignity in his manner which overawed the young man, and in anguish he asked:

"Oh, my God, can this be true? Are you quite sure of what you assert?"

"As sure as that I am sitting here opposite to you," was the sullen response. "So convinced am I of your ultimate fate, that if you refuse voluntarily to escape from the indignities that menace you, I will force the deadly potion upon you with my own hands, terrible as the alternative would be."

There was stern yet pathetic resolution in every tone of his voice, and as his son listened, the last hope died out of his heart.

He began to realize that he was in the toils, and the cold shadow of death was already settling around him.

The picture of degradation and suffering drawn by his father was repulsive to every characteristic of his nature.

He was but a poor butterfly, incapable either of deep thought or emotion; and such courage as he possessed failed him at once, when he actually realized the full horror of his position.

After many moments of gloomy and bitter thoughts he faintly said:

"Since there seems to be no escape from the punishment I have brought upon myself, I consent to embrace your alternative. I will do execution upon my own body, but in the hereafter yours will be the sin, and from you, not from me, will God require expiation for this most unnatural crime."

The squire replied with a faint touch of emotion: "God is just, and he sees the necessity of acting as I am about to do. He will absolve me in the great hereafter, for he knows how much I suffer in carrying out the justice he has himself set forth as His immutable law. Not many hours are left to act in, for the officers will be here by night in search of you, and at once you must take from my hand the potion which will save you from disgrace."

Leon bowed his head with an expression of despairing acquiescence, and the squire arose, went into the tower, and brought out a small medicine-chest.

After looking through it, he went to the door and asked of Jupiter:

"Where is the laudanum which is usually kept here?"

"I took it out to old Kitty yesterday when she asked for some to stop her toothache, and I forgot to bring it back."

"Go and bring it to me immediately."

The imperative voice sounded hard and husky to the ears of the old servant, and trembling at the suspicion of what was to be done with the deadly drug, he went to perform his errand.

He stayed away so long that his master became impatient, and as he glanced toward the place of the sun in the heavens, he muttered:

"We shall barely have time; if they should come before the doom is consummated, all will have been done in vain."

The wretched culprit sat cowering in his chair, so stunned by the events of the last sixteen hours that he was incapable of feeling the full horror of his position, as a treble-dyed criminal, escaping legal justice by the doom of his own father.

Bewildered, helpless, and uncertain, Ashley felt that his fate had passed beyond his own control; that all which now remained to him was to submit—to let destiny roll over him and crush him into nothingness.

Of course he was a coward, or he would have resisted to the last the alternative of self-destruction as an escape from disgrace; but he had no religious feeling, and he believed that when once the form was laid in the immobility of death, all consciousness was for ever lost.

He tried to think that the oblivion of the grave would be a welcome escape from the great evils that menaced him, but his soul shrank and quivered before the dread necessity which ruled him, and the bitterness of death was realized in all its keenness while he thus sat awaiting the action of his implacable father.

The blood in his veins seemed turning to ice, and the pulsation in his heart became so feeble that he fancied himself dying; but from this delusion he was aroused by the sound of the shuffling steps of Jupiter, as he unwillingly drew near with the laudanum-bottle in his hand.

With grim self-control the squire received it, and closed the door upon him at once, without replying to the mately imploring glance of the old servant.

He trembled perceptibly as he advanced toward the chair occupied by his son, and with averted face said:

"Drink this, Leon, and you will baffle those who are now upon your track! it is your only chance to escape ignominy. Death by laudanum is painless; you will sleep your life away, unconscious that it is slipping from you. It requires but a single effort, which if not made, will expose you to such infamy—such suffering, as will cause you to wish a thousand times that you had chosen death in preference to them. Swallow this draught without hesitation, Leon, and you shall take with you into eternity the pardon for your crimes which I will never accord to you if you are base enough to live."

The poor culprit shivered as he listened to this address and he waited:

"Ah, my father, it is a dire choice that you force upon me. I must recoil from it, must shrink from death when as yet I have scarcely lived."

"When a man has outraged his reputation he has already lived too long," was the stern response. "Do not play the part of the poltroon, boy, and leave me no vestige of respect for you. If I can have nerve enough to condemn my only son to death, he should have courage to meet his doom like a man."

This taunt seemed to sting Leon, and he rapidly said:

"Give me the drug. I will no longer shrink from what I see I shall not be permitted to evade."

He grasped the bottle, and as he held it before himself he went on:

"You pledge yourself that my daughter shall be received here and reared as becomes the future heiress of your name and fortune. Somehow I have a tender feeling for the helpless little creature, though I have no longer for her mother. Renew your promise to me, father, before I swallow this death-potion."

"I swear it; the child shall be brought hither and her education shall be carefully attended to." And for the first time through this trying scene the voice of the squire faltered.

He regarded the motions of his son with dilating eyes and whitening lips, for in this supreme moment the iron of his nature began to melt, and doubts to arise as to his right to execute justice upon the criminal without allowing him a chance for life.

But his fears and regrets were too late, for Leon suddenly tore out the stopple, and swallowed the contents of the bottle before a hand could be interposed to prevent the deed.

CHAPTER XL THE RESURRECTION.

The shades of night had gathered around Ashurst, and all was still within and around the old house.

On that evening there was to have been a grand merry-making there in honour of the marriage of the heir.

Invitations had been sent far and wide, but the starting news had gone forth that the groom was a recreant and a murderer—that the bride lay on a bed of sickness, perhaps of death; and the bidden guests tarried in their own homes, and talked over the terrible retribution which had come home to Squire Ashley for his hardness toward his daughter.

Elinor Ashley had eloped with a young lawyer from London while on a summer tour to the North; and although her husband died within a year of her marriage, leaving her in poverty, and burdened with a young child, her father had sternly rejected all overtures toward a reconciliation, and left her to struggle through the very depths of privation without holding forth a helping hand.

Though much sympathy was now felt and expressed for him, the general feeling was that Squire Ashley was a hard, unyielding man, who would bear this bitter blow with the outward seeming of the stoic, even while his heart inwardly bled.

The magistrate to whom application was made for a warrant to arrest Leon Ashley was an old friend, and with extreme reluctance he issued it; but the crimes of which the young man was accused were of so flagrant a nature that he could not refuse.

He urged those who were sent to Ashurst to search the house to be as respectful in their course as was consistent with the performance of their duty.

Some delays were purposely thrown in their way by Mr. Markham, that the criminal might have a chance to effect his escape, and the officers did not reach their destination till nine o'clock at night.

The tramping of their horses on the lawn aroused the squire from the stupor in which he had sat for several wretched hours; for now the fatal deed was accomplished, the unhappy father would have given all he possessed to restore life to the pale form before him. He tried to convince himself that he was in a terrible dream, for he dared not realize that his son had perished at his own command.

The old man watched him with undividing gaze, as the two sat beside the rough coffin in which lay the body of Leon Ashley, cold and rigid.

The aerial lamp cast its steady light throughout the room, distinctly revealing the livid face of the hapless young man, who lay there in calm immobility; the brow still contracted with pain, and the lips closed with an expression of firmness they had never worn while the conscious spirit ruled the body.

As the noise of the new arrival penetrated into the still room, Jupiter manifested extreme excitement, and he hoarsely whispered:

"They've come, sir; they've come after him at last; but you won't let them take his poor senseless body away."

These aroused, the squire impatiently waved his hand, and said:

"Go to the door, Jupiter, and open it. I will receive these men in this room."

The old man slowly arose, and reluctantly moved to obey the order, but his eyes more than once scanned the motionless features of his young master before he left the room.

There was a brief parley at the entrance, and then the heavy tramp of approaching feet was heard.

The squire tried to throw off the leaden weight that pressed upon him, and he vaguely passed his hand over his forehead, as if endeavouring to recall his thoughts to what was necessary to be said to those who came there to find that death had already claimed their intended victim.

The under-sheriff of the county, followed by two other men, entered the apartment, staring with astonishment at the lugubrious scene it presented. With ghastly composure the pale, stony-looking father addressed them.

"I am aware of what brings you hither, Mr. Waters, but the crime the law would avenge is already atoned for, and the criminal at this hour answers for it at a higher tribunal than that of man. Behold! there lies my son, stricken down in the flower of his youth—dead from the wound inflicted by him he is accused of destroying."

Waters paused, and looked around with that feeling of sudden awe which falls upon the spirit in the presence of death incurred by violence.

He had not thought of such a denouement as this, but he could not doubt the truth of Squire Ashley's words, for their proof lay before him in the person of his lifeless son.

He spoke with much emotion:

"Before heaven, squire, I would have been the last man to undertake such a duty as this with willingness, but I am the servant of the law, and you know that I could not evade obedience when my superior sent me the order to arrest your son."

"I know—I understand that you are but a deputy, Waters—that you were commanded to search my house for the murderer of Ernest Arden. You have found him; he lies before you, stricken in death from a wound received in a fair duel, for with his latest breath Leon avowed that such was the fact. The wound given my son prevented him from assisting his antagonist when he reeled and fell into the water, so Ernest met his death by drowning. Leon managed to get home to die under his parental roof. He died internally, and it is now many hours since life departed. Approach, and see for yourself that he is really dead; if you suspect any deception, you can touch his hand, and see that it is quite cold."

Waters had that shrinking horror of death which is often found among men, and in place of approaching nearer to the open coffin, he recoiled from it a step, and compassionately regarded the stern face on which such bitter suffering was impressed. The high character of Squire Ashley forbade any thought of falsehood or deception, and he huskily replied:

"It is quite unnecessary, Squire. I can see for myself that justice has no further business here; that a higher power has dealt with this accused. I am glad to know that the duel was perfectly fair, and as both parties perished there is nothing more to be done."

"No—nothing more," repeated the over-wrought father, in a dull tone. "Nothing more. And now gentlemen, please to leave me alone with my dead

I—I have borne so much for the last few hours that I need solitude; a little more tension on my aching brain, and I know not what may happen to me. Heaven help me! for my heart feels as if it would break with the load upon it!"

The two men who accompanied the sheriff stared at the shrouded figure in the coffin in dumb amazement, but they did not offer to speak a word.

The tremendous nature of the tragedy which that room had so lately witnessed they did not suspect, but the conflict ending in the death of both parties awoke them into silence before the majestic old man, who looked as if time could never console him for the events of the last few hours.

One of them ventured to touch the clammy hand of the recumbent form, but its chilling contact caused him to shrink suddenly away, and he drew a sigh of relief when his principal turned towards the door, and hastily retreated, as he said :

"I will return at once to those who sent me here, Squire, and report what I have seen. Of course you will be annoyed no further, and I am sure the community will show the respect and sympathy it feels for your great trouble in every possible manner."

"I shall thank them if they will forbear to interfere with me in any way; the expression of sympathy I cannot tolerate, and my most earnest desire now is, that the name of this hapless boy shall be permitted to sink into oblivion. I trust that no attempt will be made to harrow my feelings further by holding an inquest, which is needless. I watched over my son, and saw him die; and I do not need a jury of men to come hither to pronounce upon the cause of a death with which I am perfectly acquainted. I desire to bury him with the strictest privacy, as I could not brook the presence of strangers at his untimely obsequies."

"I am quite sure that your wishes will be respected, sir; and with the assurance of my deepest sympathy, I bid you good-night, Squire Ashley."

The door closed on the intruders, and the father sank down on his knees, moaning :

"My son—my son! would to heaven that I could restore to you the life I so recklessly forced you to surrender! Oh, I was cruel—hard of heart, to condemn you in the vigour of life to such a fate as this! You might have fled, you might have escaped, had I not been iron to your prayers. Oh, heaven! how dare I ask mercy of thee, when I refused it to my own child?"

His grey head was bowed over the motionless form, while he thus wailed forth his too lately awakened remorse.

Jupiter again crept into the room after shutting out the strangers, and listened keenly to the self-reproaches uttered by his old master, and a strange expression of satisfaction passed over his face.

He watched the still features of Leon with a vivid concentrated interest, which might have led one to suppose that he was trying to stamp them indelibly upon his memory.

Suddenly Jupiter started, for he thought the livid hue of the face was changing to a more natural tint, and he raised his voice and asked :

"If any young master could come back to life, wouldn't you make him take poison again? Much as you are grieving now, I fear that if heaven was to make a miracle for you, you would undo it, in your pride and hardness of heart. There, I am afraid of you no longer, and I then spoke the truth outright. You are as hard-hearted as the nether mill-stone, and you have proved it this day."

The sense of his words seemed to come slowly to the stunned mind of the listener, but he lifted his head, and after a pause replied:

"Yes, Jupiter, I acknowledge that I am all you say; and being such as I am, I feel that I am not worthy that God should work a miracle in my behalf. My boy is dead—dead; but I have at least saved his name in some measure from reproach by the falsehood I prevailed upon myself to utter. That was all I could do for him now; but, oh! if I could only bring him back to life again, I would bury my pride, and sacrifice half—nay, the whole of my fortune to save him from the punishment he had incurred."

"Are you in real earnest?"

There was earnestness and deep emotion expressed in the tones of his voice, and his master regarded him with sorrowful amazement, as he replied :

"The genuine anguish I feel no one but you could doubt, Jupiter. Look at me, bowed-down, broken in spirit to that degree that I ask sympathy from you—I, whose lofty pride led me to commit this crime sooner than see my son dragged into a public court and tried for his life! Oh, Jupiter, I am so miserable this night, that if doom would also overtake me, I should welcome the messenger of Fate as the best friend that could be sent me."

The old man drew a long breath, and after a pause said :

"I am glad that you are brought down to feel for others, sir; but if you'll listen to me, I'll soon prove to you that there's no need of asking the emissary to send after you yet while. Are you sure that you wish Master Leon was alive again?"

The squire regarded him sorrowfully.

"Poor old Jupiter! I believe you have lost your senses, but nothing will blunt mine," he bitterly said.

"No, I haven't—my senses have not gone yet, because I've got a good use for them just now. Look there!"

And Jupiter pointed, with dilating eyes, to the face of Leon Ashley, on which a faint tinge of colour began to appear.

The locked lips seemed to tremble and the eyelids quivered as if about to open upon the world again.

The squire started up, and his grey hair seemed to rise upon his head. He gasped :

"Great God, I thank thee! He that was dead is alive again, and this sin is lifted from my soul."

He sank down, grasping the hand of his son, who seemed to relapse into insensibility again.

Jupiter bent over his master and said :

"You'll help to bring him round again, and you won't do that dreadful deed any more. Since heaven has given him back to you, you'll let him live."

"Yes—yes; only bring him to life, and I will do all I can to save him. He shall escape and seek safety in a foreign land. Only bring back life to him, Jupiter, and I shall for ever bless you."

"Come, help me to take him out of this coffin, because the poor boy would die outright if he came to himself and found that he was in such a thing as that."

The squire seemed endued with sudden energy; he arose, aided Jupiter to lift the form of his son, and place it on his bed.

He chased the chill hands, sought remedies from his medicine-chest, and in half an hour the two had the satisfaction of seeing animation return, and Leon uttered a few disjointed sentences, which sounded to the ears of his father as the sweetest music he had ever heard.

His respiration soon became easy, but he again fell off in a deep sleep, seemingly unconscious of what had been done to restore the circulation to his benumbed frame.

The squire examined his condition, and drawing a deep breath, said :

"I believe he will recover now; but how his system threw off the effects of the quantity of laudanum he swallowed I cannot comprehend. There was enough in the bottle to destroy two lives. Oh! thank heaven! thank heaven! that my cruel purpose has been thwarted! I thought I had strength for what I undertook, but I now feel that I am as weak as the feeblest of mankind."

"I expected that you meant to make him drink that poison, and I poured out more than half the laudanum, and filled it up with water. I knew that enough was left to make Master Leon sleep like one that was dead; but I trusted to heaven to keep him from dying outright. I was mortally afraid that those men would get near enough to find out that he was only in a sleep that looked like death; but they were so shocked and scared, that there was little danger of that."

To Jupiter's surprise, his master here grasped his hand, and spoke with deep emotion :

"You are a better man than I am, Jupo. We have grown old together, and until this night I looked upon you as vastly my inferior. I no longer do so, for you have been more faithful to me than I have been to myself. You have saved me from remorse that must have blighted the few years I may have to spend on earth, and I must do something to prove my gratitude to you. From this hour I grant you an annual sum of money which will support you in comfort."

"Well, well—we'll see about that. I've got neither wife nor child, and I ain't got much use for it."

"It shall be yours, at all events, whenever you choose to claim it, Jupiter."

"Yes, I understand that, sir, and I'm much obliged; but I'm thinking about something else just now. If Master Leon sleeps off the effects of the laudanum, and if you are in dread about getting him off safe, you and I have a good deal to do to shut up people's mouths and throw dust in their eyes."

"Yes, I know that," replied the squire, looking around him as if just waking from a dream. "There must be a funeral, and we must find something to fill up this coffin with. I see—I understand. I will just take another look at the lad again, to feel sure that he is doing well."

He bent over the bed, felt the pulse of the heavy sleeper, ascertained that it beat regularly, though feebly, and then, with a prayer of thanksgiving in his heart, turned to attend to the duty before him.

No one save himself and Jupiter was awake in that

small household, and they both felt perfectly secure of completing, without being observed, the deception which had now become necessary.

The old servant whispered :

"We'll just lock the door and take the key, sir, while we go and get a log of wood to fill up the coffin. I'm sorry to ask you to do such a thing as this, sir, but it's too heavy for me to manage by myself."

"Of course I shall assist you, Jupiter. Come—the night wanes, and we must complete our preparations before the servants are stirring."

With a lingering, backward glance toward the bed, the father left the room, carefully locking the door behind him. After a few moments' absence, he and his companion returned, bearing between them a large log of wood, which was speedily wedged in the empty coffin in such a manner as to prevent it from rolling about. Then the lid was securely screwed down, and the coffin carried into the hall and placed upon the table. With all sense of uneasiness removed from his mind, Jupiter now called himself up in a corner, and fell into a sleep scarcely less heavy than that of him whose life his cunning had saved.

Squire Ashley could not sleep, so he sat beside the bed with his eyes fixed on the face of his rescued son, and for the first time for many years he earnestly and fervently prayed to be made a better and more merciful man.

The hours of anguish spent beside his son when he believed he had forced him into eternity with all his unrepented sins upon his head, had left their indelible impress on both mind and body.

His hair, already grey, had visibly whitened during that fearful period of suffering, and he now looked like a broken-down old man.

Leon slept on, occasionally moaning as if in pain; and at such moments his father bent over him with an expression of vivid anxiety upon his features, fearing that he was not really saved from the ruthless doom he had awarded him.

The hours dragged slowly on, and in the dead silence of the night Squire Ashley was trying in his own mind to settle on the best course to preserve the secret of his son's existence from the knowledge of the world.

It had now become almost as vital to himself as to Leon that his escape from death should not be known, for he could not endure the thought that others should become aware of the deception to which he had become a party.

He readily acquiesced in the conviction that his son must seek a foreign shore, and under an assumed name lose his identity as Leon Ashley.

He felt no unwillingness to part from him, for never again could confidence or cordial intercourse exist between them.

Leon had forfeited all claim to them by his recent conduct, and the proud father found it easier to give him up altogether than to retain him near him, even if it had been possible to do so.

Before day dawned he had resolved on the course of action he would pursue, and at length exhausted nature demanded its tribute of repose.

His head sank upon the pillow on which the pale face of his son rested, and the over-wrought father slept; slept but to renew his dreams the terrible scenes through which he had lately passed, and at length he started up bathed in cold perspiration, his hair bristling with horror, for he had dreamed that he was about to be executed for the murder of his son, which, by some inexplicable means, had become known.

When consciousness returned, he recoiled with scarcely less affright from the large, black eyes of Leon, which were wide open, and fixed on him with an expression of dread and loathing that chilled him to the soul.

His first impulse was to grasp the pallid and nerveless hand that lay upon the coverlet, and utter an audible thanksgiving for the restoration of Leon; but the faint effort made by him to avoid his touch caused Squire Ashley to draw back in his turn, and as he looked upon the living face of the son he had so passionately mourned as dead, all the pride and hardness of his nature returned.

The eyes that looked into each other held a menace, not the tender light of reconciliation; and the bitter curl on the lip of the younger man showed that he was repressing the accusation which arose to them.

The squire spoke in a hard tone :

"I would have given doom to you, Leon, but Jupiter saved me from the crime by a ruse which I have forgiven him. I have granted him your life, but the belief on my part that you were really dead, enabled me to practise a deception which will prove your salvation."

"I know—I know," feebly replied the young man.

"While you slept, I awoke and found Jupiter standing by the bedside with nourishment for me. After he had ministered it, he explained to me how I awoke on earth, and not in the terrible Hades to which your harshness had condemned me. Squire Ashley, only in

your judicial character can I ever again recognize you, for in my case you laid aside the tenderness of the parent for the sternness of the judge. I can never forgive you for the agony of those hours which I believed to be my last on earth."

The face of the squire grew sterner as he listened, and he haughtily replied :

" Then we stand on equal ground, for I can never forgive nor forget the disgrace you have brought upon my name. I will conceal you here till you are strong enough to travel, and then furnish you with money to make your escape under a feigned name. An annual sum sufficient for your support shall be paid to the address you furnish me with, but beyond that there need be no further intercourse between us."

" That will be quite satisfactory to me," replied Leon, with an expression almost of exultation in his eyes; " that is, it will be if you redeem your pledge to receive and provide handsomely for my daughter."

" I have once given you my word with regard to the child, and you well know I never recede from a promise," was the frigid reply. " She shall come hither; and if I can forgive the suffering her father has caused me, she may in time become the solace of my broken life."

Leon was not touched by these words. He was yet too bitter and resentful for all he had lately gone through to feel compassion for his father. Besides, he was intensely selfish, and the change in the old man's appearance touched no remorseful cord in his nature.

He now regarded his father as his bitterest foe, and in his heart there was no forgiveness for the condemnation he had passed upon him, for the cruel ordeal through which he had forced him to pass.

Jupiter had vainly dwelt on the anguish and remorse of his master; in place of softening the heart of Leon towards his father, he only wished it had been deeper, and harder to bear, for he felt as if no suffering was adequate for the punishment of the harsh and unnatural conduct of which the squire had been guilty.

At this juncture Jupiter came in, bringing a waiter, on which his master's breakfast was arranged. Leon again drowsed off, incapable of remaining long awake, and the squire drank the hot coffee placed before him; he scarcely touched the food, though he had been so long fasting as to feel faint for the want of it.

In a small enclosure, shaded by weeping willows, in which rested the moulderings remains of several generations of the Ashley family, the tenantless coffin was consigned to its last resting-place with much solemnity.

Jupiter acted his part so well that the truth was not suspected.

The ingenuity of the old man was much more severely taxed to account for the delicate food he required for the invalid; but as the squire confined himself strictly to his own suite of apartments, he succeeded in hoodwinking the cook completely, though he wondered greatly that her master could eat so much when he was in such terrible trouble.

The squire confined himself to his library, in which there was a spring sofa, which he used as a couch, and gave up his own room to his son till he was strong enough to take steps toward a removal.

The quantity of laudanum Leon had swallowed seemed to have enervated his system to such a degree that it was several days before a complete reaction took place; but at the close of the fourth evening he felt himself as strong and well as ever he had been in his life.

During this time he revolved the best chances of escape in his mind, and came to the resolution to disappear without having another interview with his father.

The large sum of money he had already attempted to appropriate was still in the tower, and he regarded as his own, since it had once been destined for his use.

For present use this would suffice, but in the future he intended that his father should honour all the debts he made upon him, or the world should learn the crime he had attempted against his son's life.

With this dread hanging in terror over him, Leon believed that he could exact from him any sum he saw fit to demand, and he had no scruples of conscience to prevent him from using his power whenever his necessities might require it.

Leon purposely concealed from Jupiter the improvement in his strength, and on the fourth night of his convalescence, after that faithful servitor was buried in sleep, he arose, dressed himself and prepared for his departure.

On the following morning, when the squire was aroused from his broken slumbers to learn that his son was gone from him for ever, there was one mighty pang of bereavement, and then he felt thankful that the long agony was over, and he prayed that he might make good his escape from the land of his birth.

On examination, he found that the gold had also disappeared from the tower, and all that day he shut

himself up in his chamber, refusing either food or drink, mourning in sackcloth and ashes over the degradation and desolation of his house.

A week later a letter with a foreign post mark came to him. It was directed in a feigned hand, and the contents were written in French, of which the following is a translation.

" June 26, 18—.

" SQUIRE ASHLEY:—Such sums of money as will be needed to settle the business we lately discussed, can be paid to the order of Leon Larne, to the Rothschilds in Paris, as it is my purpose to go thither very shortly.

" You perceive that I have adopted the name of my cousin, who, luckily for me, died in St. Croix not long ago.

" When he was in this country, the likeness between us was so remarkable that we were constantly mistaken for each other. I am a little fairer, but that can easily be remedied; and so confident am I of my disguise, that I shall not hurry myself to leave this country. I shall draw on you from Paris for such sums as I may need, and I have no fear that my bills will be dishonoured."

That was all; not an expression of affection—not a hint of regret at this final parting. The settlement of money matters seemed the only one of which the writer thought; and in bitterness of soul the unhappy father felt that it had been better far for him if no olive branches had reared their youthful heads beneath his roof.

He thought of his exiled daughter, but his heart had been too long hardened toward her to grow soft now, even if his darling son had not deserted him under such terrible circumstances.

He wrote to a lawyer in London and sent him the address given to him by Hunter with directions to seek out the child of Eva Weston, and if the mother was dead to send it at once by a trusty nurse to Ashurst.

Having done this, the desolate old man sat down in a kind of dumb stupor to await the advent of his grand-daughter.

(To be continued.)

TEMPTATION.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Will and the Way," "Woman and her Master," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

Come little infant, love me now,
With thine unsuspected years,
Clear the cares that dim my brow,
Disperse my sorrows and my fears
Pretty surely, twere to see.
By young Love Old Time beguiled,
While our sportings are as free
As the nurse's with the child. *Marel.*

BEFORE the agent quitted his home on his expedition to Farnsfield, he left strict directions with Martha how to conduct herself in his absence with his clients—as he termed those who employed him in their nefarious designs; she was to represent him as indisposed to some, to others she was merely to state that he was engaged.

With her usual meek submission, the poor creature promised to act as he desired; it was a relief to her to be left even for a few days alone. How sad must that heart be to which solitude is a pleasure; her mind, naturally pure and loving, revolted at the life of infamy her father led—for she was no stranger either to his pursuits or character.

With his usual cunning, Peter Quin did not even give the agent whom he employed in the abduction of little Fanny reason to suspect his intended absence from his home: although trusted by many in concerns which affected not only their honour but their lives, he himself trusted no one.

For the first time in her life, Martha ventured to make an excursion a few miles from London. How beautiful did the green lanes and fields appear to her. She was never tired of admiring the trees and flowers; everything she saw delighted her—for it possessed the charm of novelty.

The spot she had chosen for her walk was the fields near Hampstead; groups of happy children were sporting in every direction, for the day was a holiday, and the little urchins, attended by their nurses or parents, were enjoying themselves in the fresh air and genial sunshine.

Several times Martha paused to observe them; she compared their joyous childhood with the recollections of her own solitary infancy. She had never known a mother's tender care—a father's caress—both her parents died ere she could remember them.

Leaving the fields she found herself upon the heath, where the scene became even more animated; a party near her particularly attracted her attention. It con-

sisted of an aged couple, their son and daughter-in-law, who were seated upon the grass enjoying a frugal repast, whilst the children of the latter pursued their sports and gambolled around them.

One little sturdy fellow, about six years of age, had stolen his grandfather's stick, which he bore, and doubtless imagined himself exceedingly well mounted.

Two girls—delicate, fairy-looking creatures—appeared lightly to enjoy a game of ball with an elder brother, who would toss the ball upon the clean white napkin spread upon the grass—a hint, perhaps, that he thought the time was come for himself and sisters to share in the distribution of the good things they had brought with them.

Once or twice his father raised his finger reprovingly, but the old man, with a quiet smile, threw back the ball, and broke into a joyous laugh when he succeeded in hitting him.

Martha was so struck by this picture of domestic happiness, that she seated herself upon the trunk of a tree which had fallen from age, and paused to contemplate it. It filled her heart with the most tender emotion, and tears, not of envy but sympathy, unconsciously trickled down her cheeks.

The ball once more alighted upon the cloth: the old man caught it up and threw it over his head towards the spot where Martha was sitting. With a joyous laugh, the children commenced racing to see who should first obtain it. So eager were they, that they did not notice a deep pool of stagnant water in their path.

The little fellow who had been bestriding his grandfather's cane tripped and fell in. There was a general cry of consternation.

Heeding only the impulse of her woman's nature, the solitary creature—who had been silently watching their proceedings—rushed to the bank, plunged in, and seizing the child by his frock, succeeded in dragging him on the grass, just as the elder members of the family, alarmed by their shrieks, reached the spot.

" He is not hurt!" observed Martha, as she placed the child in her terrified mother's arms.

Never had the speaker felt so happy. She had been useful—her exertions had in all probability saved the life of a fellow-creature. How she had accomplished it was a mystery to herself—for the pond was not only deep, but the banks steep and difficult to ascend.

" Why, as I live," exclaimed the father of the boy, " it is Miss Quin!"

At the sound of her name the elder portion of the party drew back with an involuntary expression of dislike.

" They know me!" thought Martha, with a sigh; " I have inherited the brand of Cain from my wretched parent!"

The means by which she had been recognised occurred shortly afterwards to her recollection. The man was one of her grandfather's tenants, and consequently no stranger to the evil reputation which he bore in the neighbourhood.

The accident, which might have ended fatally, put a stop to the pleasures of the day. It was decided that they should at once return to London.

The elder boy was dispatched for the horse and cart, which had been left at the public-house hard by. He speedily returned, and Peter Quin's daughter was invited to take a seat with them—they could scarcely offer less, after the service she had rendered them.

On reaching the house—which was in the adjoining street to the one inhabited by her father—Mrs. Gurton, the mother of the boy, requested her to remain and spend the day with them.

Martha glanced at her dress, which was still wet and stained with the slime and duckweed of the pond.

" Never mind that!" observed the grateful woman; " I can lend you a change of things—if you are not above wearing them!"

The poor girl smiled sorrowfully, as she contemplated her threadbare gown, at the idea of her being above wearing anything. It was the first time in her life that she had eaten a meal from under her grandfather's roof.

The happiness, the comfort, and domestic love which presided over the table of the humble artisan—for the Gurtons, father and son, were only weavers—interested her. She could not avoid comparing their home of affection with her own solitary habitation. The contrast was both a painful and humiliating one.

" And so you are old Peter's grand-daughter!" observed the elder boy, who had been for some time silently regarding her, as they were seated at tea; " ain't you afraid of him?"

Martha did not ask why she should be afraid of him—her heart foreboded the reply. She contented herself by merely observing that he was her grandfather.

" Well!" said the lad, who was a sturdy, manly fellow, about fourteen, " the neighbours may say what they like of Peter Quin—I dare say it is all true."

enough; but I will never believe any harm of you—I am sure you cannot be wicked!"

His parents sharply reproved him for his freedom—which they saw had deeply pained their guest. His mother attempted to excuse it by observing, with more bluntness than tact, that "Jack had always been taught to speak the truth!"

When Martha arose to depart, she would have taken her wet dress with her. Mrs. Gurton proposed to send it in the morning, and receive back her own. Nothing could equal the astonishment of the artisan's wife when her visitor quietly informed her that, having no other, she could not leave without it.

"No other!" repeated Mrs. Gurton, raising her hands in pity and surprise; "your grandfather so rich, too! Well, I must say there is not another young woman of your age that would put up with it! Why, everybody knows that your mother brought a fortune when she married: not that anything Peter does—"

"Hush, Peggy!" interrupted her husband; "it is no affair of yours!"

"Did you know my mother?" inquired their visitor, anxiously—for, singularly enough, she was a stranger even to her name—Peter Quin invariably chiding her if ever she ventured to question him upon the subject. The weaver's wife looked at her husband, who made her a sign to be silent. The fact was, he did not like to meddle in any matters which concerned his landlord, who was feared as well as hated, from his vindictive disposition.

Martha repeated her question.

"You had better inquire of your grandfather, young lady," observed the master of the house; "he will doubtless inform you of all he wishes you to know; we are poor people and have no wish to meddle in affairs which *no longer concern us!*"

Finding that for the present she must abandon all hope of obtaining the information she desired, the agent's daughter took her leave, promising to bring back the things she had borrowed in the morning, when she trusted to find Mrs. Gurton alone.

Although she had seen so little of the world, Martha Quin had tact enough to know that she would be more likely to obtain her desire in the absence than in the presence of the weaver, who for some reason known best to himself, had evidently made up his mind to keep a still tongue upon the subject.

Her first care on reaching her solitary home—which after the scene of domestic comfort she had quitted appeared lonely and wretched to her—was to close the iron-bound shutters and bar up the house for the night. That done, she made a fire in the little parlour and office, and prepared to dry her clothes.

"Those poor people are happy!" she mentally exclaimed. "True they work for their daily food, but then those they love share their labour and partake of its fruits."

Her thoughts next reverted to the allusion which had been made to her mother, and the desire to learn something of the parent whose very name had been so sedulously kept from her grew strong within her.

"I am no longer a child," she muttered, "and have a right to the explanation he withholds. Perhaps I am not his grandchild," she added, struck by a sudden suspicion. "Heaven grant it! how gladly would I welcome poverty, the most obscure lot, to know myself unconnected by blood with the bold, bad man who calls himself my grandfather!"

Her meditations were broken by a sharp, loud knocking at the door. The solitary inmate of the house started, reflected for an instant, and then recollecting that it was the night she had been told to expect the arrival of the captain with an infant, which she was to take charge of till the return of Peter Quin.

Martha required no light to guide her footsteps—she could have traced her way to any part of the house blindfolded. Carefully withdrawing the bolts, she partially opened the door; we say partially, for the strong iron chain still remained a sufficient barrier between herself and any grown-up person whom she might not think proper to admit.

As she suspected, it was the man with the stolen infant.

"Quick!" said he, "open the door—there are persons in the street observing me!"

"It opens no wider for any one this night!" replied the woman, with an involuntary shudder—for the bold, licentious gaze of the ruffian had frequently startled her.

"Your grandfather expects me!"

"He bade me say he could not see you till the morning. So, if you have anything to leave, give it me, and depart at once!"

The fellow gnashed his teeth and silently cursed her. By some means or other he had been made acquainted with the absence of Peter Quin, and contemplated putting in execution a project he had long since formed of freeing himself from the slavery in which that worthy person so long had held him, by robbing the house of certain proofs which at any time would

have sent him to the scaffold, which proofs, he well knew, the agent had by him.

"This is folly!" he said; "I must speak with you!"

"Speak!" said Martha, calmly.

"I shall have the watch upon me!"

"It will be your own fault," answered the girl—who felt more and more the necessity of keeping the chain between them—"not mine! You might, as well preach to the stones, man of blood and crime," she added, "as seek to shake my resolution! I know you: and those who once obtain that knowledge, are worse than fools to trust to you! Give me your burthen, or depart at once!"

"Take it, then, in the fiend's name!" exclaimed the captain, thrusting the infant between the half open door; "I believe the brat is either dead or senseless for want of food. As for the suspicions you have formed, you know you wrong me—I would not harm a hair of your head—I love you too well for that!"

With a gesture of ineffable disgust at the idea of the speaker entertaining a thought of what he was pleased to designate his love towards her, Martha received the child, which was still enveloped in the shawl; and after once more securing the door, retired with her burthen to the parlour.

On removing the covering she at first thought the infant was dead; nor was it till she had clasped its tender limbs for some time before the fire, that a faint cry undeceived her; fortunately there was some milk in the house, which the agent's daughter had reserved for her supper: this she hastily warmed and fed the little stranger with. It ate it eagerly—looking up in her pale face from time to time with a faint smile.

The solitary creature experienced a strange gush of tenderness in her heart as the orphan nestled closely to her breast, and fell into a gentle sleep. She felt as if Providence, in pity to her loneliness, had sent her at last a being she could love—something which told her heart it still was human.

"Sweet innocent!" she murmured; "doubtless it has been torn from its unhappy mother, who even now is weeping for its loss, or calling in accents of despair for her lost idol—so young and helpless, too! Would to heaven it might remain with me! Life would not seem so perfectly a blank if I had some one to love me!"

Martha retired with the infant to her own chamber; and although unused to the office of nurse, performed its duties in undressing her with such kindness that it did not break the little stranger's sleep.

As she removed its frock, a ribbon round its neck attracted her attention. Several trinkets were attached to it. The woman carefully examined them, in the hope that they might hereafter afford some clue by which the child might be recognised and restored to its parents.

One of the trinkets was an amethyst, set as a seal. It bore both a crest and a device. The former was a greyhound couchant, and the motto "Tiens à la verité"—"Hold to the truth."

"I certainly have seen this, or one similar to it somewhere before!" thought Martha, drawing the candle nearer, that she might examine it more closely; "it could not have been upon a letter!" she added, musingly; "for I receive none!"

After some minutes spent in reflection, she suddenly recollects that in a collection of trinkets which her father kept in his cabinet was a watch with the same engraving and words. It was one of the many articles of value he had purchased of the captain, and more than once she had heard the old man boast that the possession of it was sufficient evidence for him to hang him if he chose.

"It is the same!" she exclaimed, with a shudder—for she surmised but too truly the fearful means by which the watch had been obtained. "How fortunate the villain did not see it!"

Theresa, after the death of her sister, had found the seal in her desk; but without attaching any importance to the discovery, on the morning of her marriage she had placed the ribbon with that and the rest of the trinkets round the neck of her niece, as a plaything during her absence.

The agent's daughter revolved in her mind if there were any possible means of obtaining the watch from her grandfather's secret store. Hitherto she had been so submissive—shown so little curiosity respecting his proceedings—that the old man never considered her presence in the house as a restraint upon him. She knew where he concealed his keys, and in the hope that he had not taken them with him, hastily left the room, and descended to the parlour.

She found them, as she expected, in the recess so cunningly contrived in the floor beneath the table. It was the first time in her life she had ever ventured upon anything like an act of disobedience or deceit, and her hand trembled so violently as she thrust the key into the old-fashioned cabinet, that she had to

make the attempt twice before she succeeded in turning it.

"As I said!" she murmured, at the same time drawing forth the watch; "the very words and design!" She did not call it a crest—probably being ignorant of the meaning of the word.

In the same drawer was a printed paper, carefully folded, and marked "important" on the back. This Martha also possessed herself of, and retreated hastily to her own room, pursued by her fears.

"Heaven will pardon me!" she murmured; "it sees the motive of my conduct! Besides, I can replace them before he returns!"

The paper marked important, in the handwriting of Peter Quin, was neither a bank bill, bond, or deed; but simply a description of the person of a gentleman who had disappeared, to the grief and surprise of his family, and offering a large reward for any intelligence respecting him.

Persons who could furnish any were directed to apply to Mr. Foster, Solicitor, Inner Temple.

Martha carefully copied it, word for word, in her large, clerk-like hand; and sewing it with the trinkets and ribbon in the mattress of her bed, prepared to retire to rest. She would willingly have added the watch, but dared not—her terror of her grandfather was too great: he would be sure to miss it.

Having accomplished her task, the poor, timid creature retired to rest, but not to sleep. The events of the day had too much excited her. Daylight began to peep through the casement of her chamber, before her busy, overwrought brain permitted her to taste the repose she so much needed.

Martha's first care the following morning was to replace the watch and paper in the cabinet, and return the key to its hiding-place. That done, she prepared breakfast for herself and the little stranger in whose welfare she had taken such a sudden and novel interest.

No wonder—the orphan was something for her to love—to lavish the long-suppressed affections of her heart upon.

"Could I but retain the infant with me," she repeated several times to herself, as she regarded Fanny, "life would not appear so desolate!"

Just as the repast was finished, there was a knocking at the door.

The visitor proved to be no other than her acquaintance of the preceding day—Mrs. Gurton, the wife of her grandfather's tenant.

The woman had called for the clothes she had lent her. "Passing that way," she observed, "she was willing to spare Miss Quin the trouble of bringing them."

Martha was sufficiently a woman of the world to judge that curiosity had at least as much to do with her visit as politeness. It was something gratifying to the weaver's wife to penetrate into the interior of a house whose doors had so long been closed against the world.

"It is a dull place!" quietly observed the agent's grand-daughter, noticing that Mrs. Gurton was leisurely taking a survey of the wretched furniture of the room.

"Nothing changed, I perceive!" replied the woman; "the same chairs and tables! I could almost fancy that I recognised the old cobwebs upon the ceiling and walls—the clock down, too!"

Martha naturally felt surprised at a remark which implied a former and intimate acquaintance with the place; she recollects how the weaver had checked the loquacity of his wife the preceding day, when speaking of her parents.

"It is not your first visit here, then?"

"I should think not!" exclaimed Mrs. Gurton, with a significant smile. "I would wager my best shawl that I could name every article in the rooms above—from the Indian chintz furniture to the curious old cabinet in your grandfather's bed-room—in which, they do say," she added, lowering her voice, "he keeps more gold and notes than are to be found the Bank of England!"

At the mention of the cabinet, her hearer changed colour: she almost expected the speaker to allude to her own visit to it.

"Did you never hear your grandfather speak of Mary Bright?" continued her visitor.

"Never."

"Well, I don't wonder at it!" added the weaver's wife, bitterly; "few persons like to mention those they have wronged—and Peter Quin, after all, has, I suppose, some conscience, though it is difficult to believe it, after the state I find you in!"

"Pray explain yourself!" said Martha, taking her hand; "you alluded yesterday to my mother! Alas! I never even heard her name! I am ignorant if I have a relative in the world except my grandfather!"

"Plenty of relatives," interrupted Mrs. Gurton, "who ought to feel proud to own you—for I begin to think that Peter has not corrupted your heart!"

"You knew my mother?"

"I nursed her!" resumed the woman: "of course I was a mere girl then! Her husband—Peter's son—was just dead, and you an infant about six years of age! Poor thing! the loss of your father broke her heart—at least, so it was said; but I have always had my own opinion upon that point!"

The forlorn being who, for the first time in her life, was listening to these details of her family, shuddered. It was in vain that she entreated the speaker to explain herself. The woman shook her head, and muttered something about getting into trouble and the anger of her husband, if it should reach his ears.

"As for the rest," she said, speaking more plainly, "you have a right to know, and I will tell you! Peter Quin and his son were partners; but it was a different sort of trade, I believe, they followed then! When your father died, he left everything to his widow and child—that I know; for I well remember the fury of your grandfather, when he discovered that she had proved the will!"

"Then I am not dependent upon him for my daily bread?" exclaimed Martha, eagerly.

"Dependent upon him—not more than I am!" replied her informant. You are rich—or at least ought to be! The rest is soon told! From the day of the quarrel between Peter Quin and his daughter-in-law, the latter gradually sickened. The doctors, not knowing what was the matter with her, just called it a broken heart—and the world believed it!"

"Did you believe it?" demanded the grand-daughter of the agent, placing her hand upon her arm, and looking anxiously into her face.

"It matters little what I believed now!" answered the woman, evasively; "when your poor mother was dying, she told me, in the presence of Peter Quin, that she had provided for me—for I had served her faithfully; but I never received one farthing!"

"How so?"

"The will could not be found!" replied the weaver's wife; "doubtless it fell into your grandfather's hands, who had his own reasons for suppressing it! And now, my dear young lady, you know all that I can tell you!"

"Except the name of my mother!"

"Ah, true—true—she was the daughter of a Spanish merchant, named Mendez! Some people said that she was a Jewess; others, a gipsy; but I never believed them! She must have been a good Christian," added the speaker; "for I have heard her for hours praying in her native tongue over the cradle in which you were sleeping!"

Tears chased each other down the cheeks of Martha, on hearing that she had been the object of so much affection. It was soothing to her to know that she had once been loved, even though it was not a memory to her.

"Now," said Mrs. Gurton, rising to depart, "I have said my say! You know all that I can tell you, and it will be your own fault if you suffer Peter Quin to keep you in poverty and misery any longer! If there is anything I can do for you, by day or by night, you may command me—and my husband, too, for the matter of that," added the speaker; "we have not forgotten that, but for you, our trip yesterday might have ended sadly!"

"I must think—reflect!" muttered the granddaughter of the agent; "for I have no friends to counsel me!"

"But you have that which will procure them?"

Martha looked at her doubtfully.

"Money!" continued the speaker; "at least you can have it—and that is much the same thing! But whatever you do," she added, lowering her voice, as if she feared the echoes of that lonely chamber would repeat her words, "act cautiously—and above all, suddenly! Never let Peter Quin suspect you meditate raising your hand till you have struck the blow!"

"And why not?" demanded the grand-daughter, wishing to feel assured that she perfectly comprehended the nature of her caution.

"Why? Nothing—no reason in particular!" answered her visitor, in a tone of affected carelessness; "I merely meant that those who deal with your grandfather cannot be too much upon their guard!"

(To be continued.)

FRENCH HONEY.—A great portion of the immense quantity of honey consumed in France is supplied from the Island of Corsica, and from Brittany. Corsica produced so much wax in ancient times, that the Romans imposed on it an annual tribute of a hundred thousand pounds weight. Subsequently the inhabitants revolted, and they were punished by the tribute being raised to two hundred thousand pounds weight annually, which they were able to supply. Wax is to honey in Corsica as one to fifteen, so that the inhabitants must have gathered about three million pounds of honey. When Corsica became a dependency of the Papal Court, it paid its taxes in wax; and the quantity was sufficient to supply the consumption

not only of the churches in the city of Rome, but of those in the Papal States. Brittany likewise supplies a quantity of honey, but of inferior quality to that of Corsica. The annual value of the honey and wax produced in that province is estimated at about five million francs.

SHARKS ON THE ENGLISH COAST.—A large specimen of the hammer-headed shark has been captured at Ilfracombe. It was observed floundering among the rocks near the ladies' bathing cove by the boatmen on the quay-head, who with great difficulty and some risk secured it by ropes, and triumphantly towed it into Ilfracombe Harbour. On measurement it was found to be 18 ft. 7 in. in length, 7 ft. 2 in. in girth behind the pectoral fins, 3 ft. 3 in. between orbits of the eyes, which were nearly covered by crustacean parasites. At Weston-super-Mare, also, a shark from five to six feet in length, was captured recently. It was with difficulty that four men could drag it ashore. The final struggle was fierce and exciting. The shark, finding that it could not bite the men, snapped at everything within its reach. Catching hold of a large pebble, it ground it at savagely, leaving the marks of its teeth in the solid stones and breaking them with the violence of the effort.

BIRD SONG.

I oft have the carolling heard
Of a gay little amorous bird,
And as plain as can be is each word,
As aloft in a tree
Thus aloud warbles he—
I love you! I love you! I love you!
He sings at a jovial rate,
As if some young bird for his mate
He were courting, with rapture elate,
And I like well to hear
His sweet lay ringing clear—
I love you! I love you! I love you!

I like it, I say, for I too
Am a lover, like him—it is true!
And thinking of her whom I woo,
I often sing myself,
Like that winged little elf—
I love you! I love you! I love you!

I trust that he sings not in vain,
That soon a fond mate he may gain,
Nor forget then nor after his strain,
But sing on more and more,
The same song as before—

I love you! I love you! I love you!
But dearer, far dearer than she,
The bird's bonny sweetheart may be
Unto him, is my own unto me,
And I hope and I pray
She will heed too the lay—
I love you! I love you! I love you!

W. L. S.

THE SPOILED CHILD.

THERE never was a better woman than Mrs. Hillgrove; never one who strove to do her duty to her neighbour, to be charitable to the poor, and to forgive her enemies more steadily and truly. A religious woman, too, observant of all outward forms of Christianity, and taking to heart its precepts, with the hope that at the last Heaven would be merciful to her and take her home to rest.

She had had trouble. What widow has not? But, perhaps, her greatest trouble came before widowhood, for Henry Hillgrove had not been too kind or too constant to his pretty wife. Whatever his peccadilles may have been, however, she hid them from the world, and loved and mourned him truly; and the greatest joy of her life was the fact that little Harry, her only child, was so like his father. Like him he was, indeed. He had the same black, glancing, fearless eye, the same rich colour, and, alas! the same quiet spirit had he in his veins; his blood ran red and hot, and fast, as his father's had before him.

So, as the child grew, the animal life manifested itself more strongly every hour. Not tree upon the prettiest place his mother owned but he had been at the top of, before he was ten years old. Climbing and swimming, and throwing stones, and riding the pony, and meddling with everything which had sharp points or jagged edges, and seeking those spots where there was most danger of falling down or of being crushed by something, young Harry kept his mother in a state of such anxiety from morning until night, as a chicken who has hatched a brood of ducks, and sees them taking to the pond, alone can appreciate. Yet with the fear mingled a sort of admiration of his

daring, and the ever recurring thought, "Just like his father."

The mothers of good and the mothers of bad boys have this to bear the world over, and discretion comes with years.

But, perhaps, in the matter of disobedience and in those petty thefts which Dinah, the maid-of-all-work allotted to us "snooping," Master Harry never had his equal.

Vainly were preserves and pickles locked up and placed on high shelves; vainly was the cake-box padlocked. Somehow the boy obtained his fill of sweets and sours at will.

As for commands, they might as well have been uttered to the whirlwind for all he heeded them.

A sound whipping, some systematic punishment, even a determined reproof from his mother, might have checked him at first; but these things Mrs. Hillgrove never dreamt of. She had taught him it was wrong to steal or to "bey parents." He knew the ten commandments by heart, and was quite well aware of his wrong-doing.

But the quiet teaching which would have availed in many cases was useless in his. So Harry stole, and lied, and disobeyed orders, and pretty Mrs. Hillgrove said to herself, "after all, the orders were for his own good, and the things he has taken were mine, and so his own; and as for falsehoods, children always tell those, I'm afraid;" and then, with a faint hope of overcoming the evil, humoured him more and more, and all in vain; for the child took by stealth what he might have had for the asking, and lied to hide the theft, and did as he chose, in defiance of all rules.

Yet, he was so handsome, so merry, so fond of lying with his curly head in his mother's lap, so full of bright fancies, and such a genius, that others beside Mrs. Hillgrove felt sure the boy would make a fine man after all, and set his faults aside as childish pranks soon to be forgotten.

She found this out during his first school years. She had educated him herself until his fourteenth birthday, and sent him from her with many sighs and tears.

The proof of his wrong-doing came first in a long bill from a confectioner, run up without any idea of settlement, under a false name. And at last, in the theft of a gold watch from a fellow pupil.

The mother had at first indignantly repudiated these accusations, but they were brought home too plainly for even her mind to entertain a doubt of their truth.

She settled with the confectioner with streaming eyes, and that individual promised to "say nothing about the matter." But the master of the school was less lenient, and Master Harry was dismissed with a stern reprimand.

"You have proved yourself a thief and a liar. Your example might ruin my other boys; and you seem too hardened to repent."

And so Mrs. Hillgrove's idol returned to her in disgrace. Then the mother endeavoured to begin a reformation. It was too late. Past the whipping age—past the time when "mother's" grief or anger would have melted him to tears, young Hopeful grew indignant, and declared that he "couldn't stand this preaching, and that he should runaway to sea, or hang himself."

At that mamma grew frightened, and begged him not to be desperate, "for of course, my love, some other boy led you into it. You never, never would have done so of your own accord."

And Master Harry, who had never thought of this excuse before, caught at it, and with an elbow at his eye, to hide, not tears, but the want of them, blabbed:

"Of course, ma. Tom Brown put me up to it. He's enough to ruin any boy, ma!"

"I know it," said Mrs. Hillgrove; "and to think of the injustice they've done my child. That Tom Brown has never heard a word about it, of course; and so noble of you not to expose him—just like your poor father."

And Harry was petted, and coaxed, and made much of as a martyr to his own noble spirit, and a victim of tyranny.

At his other schools, Harry (more prudent than of yore) avoided detection. But, at home, Dinah's old annoyance of snooping had changed to the habit of pocketing small change, odd dollars, money in any shape, from pennies up, when his bountiful supply of pocket-money ran short. It was Harry's whim to be king amongst the boys, and small change in plenty ensures that object. Harry could always hire a boat, treat a dozen "fellows" to tarts or cream, bribe everybody bribeable to secrecy, and make school a glorious place; and with the applause of his million, it mattered little to the lad that his mother wept, that she pinched herself, and wore the same bonnet and shawl for years.

Poor Mrs. Hillgrove began to know this, and her

cheeks grew thin, and her hair grey wonderfully fast. The boy was taller than she was by this time, and yet the baby-veices were only strengthened.

She had one hope, however, and that was that college life would save him. She had some dreams of hard, serious study, of days passed with good and learned men, in worthy occupation. Nothing knew she of college pranks and dissipation, and so, putting forth every effort, she sent her boy to college.

In a year he was expelled; but not before he had learned one thing, and that was how to drink. He came home an accomplished tippler.

So, after this poor Mrs. Hillgrove passed wretched evenings waiting for her son's returning steps; and more wretched nights, after she had led him to his chamber, and watched that he did not set the curtains for fire.

And glad was she when one day Master Harry, of his own accord, declared his intention of turning over a new leaf, and being steady. He had a chance of going into business, and meant to make his fortune.

"And we'll live in style, mother," said Harry; "and you shall have silk dresses and caps, like Squire Gordon's wife. The mercantile life for me. I'll be a merchant prince before I die!" and the youth and his mother laughed together, for she felt young again in her new-found hope.

It really seemed, for a good while, as though Harry had "turned over a new leaf."

When he came from the city on Saturday night he was always sober, and he certainly made money—a surprising quantity for a clerk, had his mother but known it.

Other people said so—other people hinted strange things; eyes were watching him, feet tracking him, lips whispering:

"He was never honest when a boy."

At last the crisis came. One night the mother waited for her boy in vain. Many fears possessed her. The greatest that he might have been led to drink again. So fearful and anxious she sat, watching the dark garden until the Sabbath dawned had nearly come.

Then, in the grey cold light, something crouching, and shivering, and pallid crept in at the gate; and she knew, ere he opened the door, that something horrible had happened. He came in, and crouched down by the fire in the dining-room, with his eyes starting from their sockets, and his hands trembling.

"Get me something to eat, mother," he said; "and give me what money you can spare, and my linen. I must be off before daylight. I'm not safe, perhaps, even now."

"Safe from what, my son?" sobbed the mother.

But Harry only answered:

"You'll know soon enough. I'm in trouble. Get me off; it's all you can do."

"Have you killed anyone?" moaned the mother; and Harry answered:

"I wish I had!"

Cold and faint she packed up the little portmanteau, and unlocked the drawer of the cabinet where she kept such money as she drew monthly from the bank, and sat watching her boy eat ravenously the food she set before him.

Not a question did she ask, but I think she guessed the truth; for when she caught him in her arms at parting she sobbed:

"Oh, my child! my child! it is your mother's fault!"

And he said not a word, but slunk away like any thief.

When the long Sabbath had passed, and Monday came, there came with it two red-faced men, who sought for Harry, and who told his mother the truth.

He had robbed his employer, steadily and artfully; taking small sums at first, and larger ones as he grew bolder, until the use he made of his money brought detection upon him.

Oh, the tale she heard of gambling dens, and evil associates, and wine-bibbing. At last she folded her hands, as in prayer, and besought them not to tell her more, for the love of heaven!

She told them—for she could not lie—that he had been home. More she could not tell them. They left her on his scent, and three hours after the wretched mother was on her way to the city.

There, seeking out the employer whom her son had robbed, she fell at his feet, and asked him to name the sum he had lost, to let her pay it if she could do so, and to keep the deed a secret.

The merchant pondered.

"The boy should be made an example of," he said. Then casting a glance at the grey head and wrinkled face, his heart smote him, for they recalled those of his own mother.

"It is for your sake," he said. "You look as though your heart were broken already."

So Mrs. Hillgrove went home, sold her little house and paid over to the merchant the sum he had been

despoiled of, and hid herself in a far off village, where, in her old age, she toiled for her daily bread for the first time in her life.

What money she had left—and very, very little it was—she kept lest Harry should come to her and need it.

But he never came. She sought for him, and prayed for his return year in and year out. Of her little earning she hoarded pence and shillings for him, and lived on the sparest food. And never did she do penance for a fault within the convent walls more rigidly than that she for that one fault—the spoiling of her child.

So the years rolled on.

In the little village where she lived no one knew her, and being known to have a little money, and live so sparingly, she came to be called a miser.

Wondrous stories were told of bags of gold hidden in her little hat; and many a joke and jest were plucked at her, and many a time the school-children hooted "miser" and "witch" after her along the streets. For she who had been so pretty once was haggard and wrinkled now, and wore gowns and bonnets out of fashion, and had learned a habit of talking to herself, which made her seem uncanny.

Sometimes, at eighty, when her faculties began to fail her, and the present merged into the past, people would hear her, sitting by the wayside with her knitting, muttering:

"It's his mother's fault, sir; she spoiled him. Spare the rod and spoil the child" from Scripture. Not Harry, sir, but his mother is to blame."

And then boys would laugh more, and their elders shake their heads and wonder if the poor old soul had not had trouble.

At last the story of hidden money brought the old woman's hat under the eyes of evil men, and one night she awakened to hear a noise at her door.

At first she thought it was a dog stratching. Then that some supernatural agency produced the sounds. At last she became convinced that some one was sawing away the lock.

An awful terror came over her. She lost all power to move.

Lying still and watching the door, she saw it open soon, and a man crept in—a man with craps over his face and a pistol in his hand. He went to all the drawers and cupboards. He searched the chimney, and at last he came to the bed, and looked down at her white face and staring eyes.

"Don't make a noise if you want to live, old woman," he said; "but fork over your money. We know it's hid here. Where is it?"

In reply she took from under her pillow a little ragged purse. The robber flung it at her.

"That won't serve you," he said, with an oath; "we want your hidden treasure—your bags of gold and silver. Where are they?"

"I have none," she said. "How should I come by them?"

The robber, enraged, clutched her throat, and put his pistol to her temples.

"I give you until I count ten to tell the truth, old woman," he said. "After that I'll blow your brains out!" One, two, three—"

He counted on steadily, and the old woman listened. When he had come to five, she said once more:

"I have no money in the house."

"You lie! Come, you have five more chances!"

Then giving up all hope she folded her hands and prayed:

"Forgive him; perhaps his mother spoiled him, as I did Harry."

She closed her eyes then, expecting to receive her death-blow, but suddenly the fierce grasp relaxed, and she heard a groan, and opening her eyes, saw the man grovelling on the floor—grovelling and moaning, and tearing his black hair.

The mask of craps was off, and she saw his face, and knew it. It was her son's!

"Harry!" she said.

And the man answered:

"Mother, mother, is it you?" and shrunk away.

But she crept towards him, she knelt beside him, and rocked and sobbed as she might over a dying baby.

"He never knew it was I," she moaned, "never!"

And the man answered:

"Oh, mother, I thought you dead years ago!"

Then in a little while she grew still, and sat with her hands on his head, and those hands felt very cold, and her face was strangely rigid. They frightened her wretched son.

"Mother," he said, "speak to me!"

And she answered:

"God bless you! I'm going first;—it was all my fault!" and the next moment fell forward in his arms stone dead.

The next morning the neighbours found her lying in her bed, her eyes closed and her arms folded on her bosom; and in the woods hard by, swinging from the

branch of an oak, the body of a man of middle age, who had there hung himself.

Some in the place identified him as a noted burglar, who had for years gone by the name of "Black Hal;" but in his pocket was found an old memorandum book, on the fly-leaf of which was written the name "Harry Hillgrove."

M. K. D.

BEES IN ROXBURGHSHIRE.

The winter and spring of 1864, like the preceding autumn, was adverse to the apiculturists. Many of the most experienced had begun to despair, not only from the reduction of the hives, but also from their feeble condition.

This spring, as it usually the case after a crisis, great diversity of opinion and position prevailed among bee-keepers. Some had nearly all their hives to feed during winter, whilst with others they required nothing, being in a strong, thriving state, ready on the first fine day to visit the opening flower and add to their stores, which the winter had not exhausted.

In April and May the weather on the whole was favourable for bees, and furnished an average number of fine days and grateful blossoms, affording considerable scope for their industry.

Nothing, however, appeared in their general procedure to attract particular attention till June, when the dewy nights and the warm bright days for which that month was remarkable, brought an abundant supply of food in the flowers of the white clover, which have been excessively rich this summer. This caused great activity in their movements, and a restlessness at night rarely ever witnessed. More than ordinary vigilance, therefore, on the part of the careful bee-keeper was necessary, and even the most skilled express their astonishment at the rapid progress made by them.

For example, Mr. James Fletcher, Morebattle, has been a bee-breeders in Roxburghshire for nineteen years, and he considers this the most wonderful season during that period. His stock in-spring was reduced to three hives, and from these he has had ten swarms.

A short history of one of the most prolific may be interesting, and we give it from his notes.

"First swarm thrown off June 12th; second and third swarms on the 24th and 25th respectively. The bees continued working up to July 1st, when another and fourth swarm was thrown off and a queen turned out, intimating that they had finished breeding for the season. The first of these swarms is now a heavy hive; it has been caked below, and a cap put on the top to get the honey pure. On July 3rd the cap was nearly full, and would weigh at least 14lb. of flower honey."

Another enthusiastic bee-keeper, Mr. James Plummer, Kelso, also informs us that his bees have been singularly productive this season. The yield of one of his hives is as follows:—

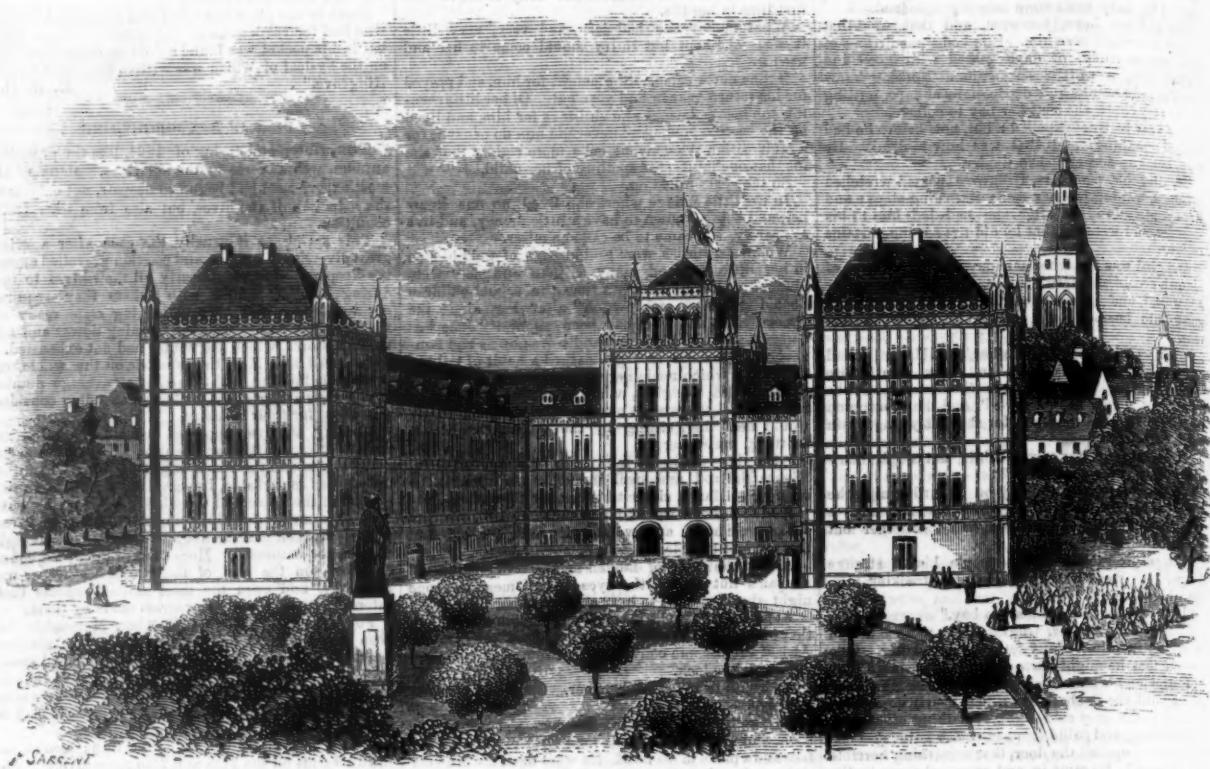
"June 3rd, it cast a swarm; on the 13th a second; on the 16th, when another swarm was expected, it expelled three queens; but again on July 1st threw off another swarm, equally as strong as the second."

As there were signs of another cast, Mr. Plummer, to avoid further increase, inserted pegs underneath the hive, and put on a glass cap, which is now filled with 6lb. of flower honey, remarkably pure and beautifully sealed. There have been cases where hives have thrown off five swarms, but where this has occurred it has not been under good management, as it weakens the parent hive even in the best seasons and under the most favourable circumstances.

From accounts we have received from different parts of the country, there is every prospect of an abundant supply of honey. Should the autumn prove fine, so that those sent to the moors get the full benefit of the heather, honey, both for quality and quantity, will doubtless be such as has not been equalled for many years.

DR. LIVINGSTONE, the celebrated African explorer, is now a guest of Colonel Webb, High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, at Newstead Abbey.

A REMARKABLE coincidence is connected with the late ceremony at Tenby, which ought not to be passed over without notice. About 400 years ago the Earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII., sought shelter at Tenby, with his mother, after being besieged in Pembroke Castle, and was lodged by Mr. Thomas White, then Mayor of Tenby, and a wealthy wine-merchant, whose monument still forms an interesting object in the parish church. Mr. White provided a vessel for the Royal fugitive, which conveyed him safe to Brittany, a service for which he was afterwards rewarded with a grant for life of the king's lands around the town. It is a curious fact that on the present occasion a lineal descendant of this John White—Mr. George White, also a wine-merchant—is now Mayor of Tenby, and thus he becomes associated with another event connecting Tenby with the national history.



A. SARTORIUS

[THE DUCAL PALACE, CHURCH OF ST. MORITZ, AND TOWN.]

HER MAJESTY'S VISIT TO GERMANY.

The proverbial "Queen's weather" attended Her Majesty on her departure from her dominions upon her Continental pilgrimage; so in reality may be designated the present visit of Her Majesty to Germany. The passage of the Royal squadron to Antwerp was extremely favourable, and on its arrival there, the Duke and Duchess of Brabant came on board to receive the royal traveller, and conduct the illustrious visitors to the king's palace at Laeken. Her Majesty's stay there, however, was very brief; the journey to Coburg being resumed the same evening.

Our illustration affords a view of the Ducal Palace in the capital of the principality. The palace is a very noble structure, and has a library of 30,000 volumes, and a collection of natural history, minerals, coins, and prints. The palace, of which the German designation is Ehrenburg, or burg of honour, a name which was conferred on it by the Emperor Charles V., occupies three sides of a square, and is of simple and chaste Gothic architecture. At the back, and connected with it, is a quadrangle of old buildings, part of a former palace. The interior of the structure is not characterised by much splendour, being more designed for comfort than display. The grand saloon, however, is a very noble apartment; it has a deeply moulded ceiling, supported by gigantic caryatides, the spaces between these figures being filled with mirrors and gorgeous hangings. At each end a row of columns partly separates it from two smaller saloons or retiring rooms.

The apartments previously occupied by Her Majesty and the Royal children are precisely in the same state as they were on the Queen's last visit; and in the rooms of his late Royal Highness Prince Albert, nothing whatever has been touched—affording a sad and unchanged memento mori of the lamented Prince Consort. The reigning Duke of Coburg's apartments are in the opposite wing of the palace; one small room of the suite being entirely decorated with photographic portraits of the English princesses and princes; but indeed there is scarcely an apartment in the palace which is without a bust or portrait of Her Majesty, her late Consort, or some member of the Royal Family.

In front of the palace is a circular parterre, with numerous orange trees; and having in the centre a fine bronze statue of the late Duke of Coburg, as shown in our illustration.

There are in the town government buildings, in the Italian style of architecture, the town hall, five churches, of which Saint Maurice's (or Moritz) Church, shown in

our engraving, contains the ducal vault and some good monuments; the arsenal, orphan asylum, three hospitals, &c. The gymnasium, founded in 1605, by Duke John Casimir, hence called Casimirianum, has all the rights and privileges of a university. There are in Coburg, besides, two public libraries, a collection of natural history, an observatory, with a normal school (pädagogium) attached to it; various schools, a society of the arts and sciences, two infirmaries, a savings' bank, a ladies' benevolent association, and other charitable institutions.

The town of Coburg, the capital of the Duchy, is situated in a picturesque valley on the banks of the Itz, is surrounded by walls, and, with its long suburbs, is divided into nine quarters, which have two market-places, and is far from being a handsome town; the houses are small, the streets rough, and in many places overgrown with grass.

The inhabitants carry on manufactures of woollens, cottons, linen, furniture, buckles, dyeing, especially the red Turkey red; gold and silver articles, chocolate, sal-ammoniac, tools, &c. They have also a considerable trade in wool, cloth, cottons, horse-hair, flour, seeds, &c. There are several pleasure grounds round the town, as well as many delightful rides and walks—among other places, to the ducal country seat, Rosenau, which was an old baronial castle, and has been restored in the Gothic style. Near the town are marble-polishing mills, and iron and copper works. On a lofty hill in the vicinity, which commands a beautiful prospect, is the ancient fortress of Coburg, surrounded with a strong wall and five bastions. It contains many interesting remains of antiquity, arms, armour, &c. It was for some time the residence of Luther, where he delivered many of his discourses.

The territory of Coburg, over which an English prince will one day reign, is the most southern of the independent principalities of Saxony, is bounded by the territories of Schwarzburg, Meiningen, Hildburghausen, and Bavaria; including also the territories of Königsberg and Sonnenfeld. Its area is about 200 square miles, about one-fourth more than the area of Rutlandshire. It is composed of the great valley of the Itz, which is bordered on the north by the Thuringian mountains, and is traversed by the rivers Itz, Rodach, Steinach, Naselach, Lauter, and others.

Besides Coburg, properly so called, the principality now comprehends the whole of the duchy of Gotha, and the principality of Lichtenberg, which lies on the left bank of the Rhine: the whole constitutes the duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. 'Coburg Proper' belonged formerly to the counts of Henneberg; it came

by marriage to the house of Saxony, whence it passed into the Ernestine line, and in 1735 to the branch of Saalfeld. The principality of Lichtenberg was added to it in 1816, and the duchy of Gotha (with the exception of some small districts) in 1826, in consequence of that house having become extinct by the death of Duke Frederic IV., when it was made over to the house of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, by virtue of a family compact among the ducal Saxon branches, in exchange for the duchy of Saalfeld and several other districts. Thus arose the present duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, containing altogether about 1,000 square miles, nearly as large as Dorsetshire, and having eleven towns, ten market-towns, 253 villages and hamlets. The legislative body consists of a single chamber, composed of six deputies from the nobility, and eleven from the magistracy, towns, and rural districts.

The climate is mild, especially in the fruitful valley of the Itz. The agricultural products are timber and fuel, grain, particularly peas, beans, hops, vegetables, &c. Iron, copper, cobalt, coal (but none of them in large quantities). Limestone, sandstone, marble, alabaster, gypsum, porcelain earth, &c., are found in the manufacture of linen, woollens, and cotton, wooden toys, and the rearing of cattle. The principal articles of export are fatted cattle and grain; besides butter, leather, wood, wool, linen, and other manufactured goods. The duke takes the fifth rank among the Saxon dukes, and with them has the twelfth place at the Diet, and a separate voice at the Plenum, or in the full assemblies of the Diet.

Fossil Elephants.—Dr. Adams continues his explorations in search of remains of the Maltese fossil elephant. Recently he was fortunate enough to discover some more relics of this curious animal in several new localities. He has met with its teeth in great quantities in a cavern near Crendi. In another gap evidently at one time the bed of a torrent, he has found the teeth and bones of thirty more individuals. These skeletons of elephants are met with jammed between large blocks of stones, in a way that clearly shows that the carcasses must have been hurled into their present situation by violent floods or freshets. Dr. Adams has now almost completed the skeleton of this wonderful little representative of an order of quadrupeds to which we had, until the fossil Maltese elephant appeared, applied the term gigantic. It seems from Dr. Adams's enquiries that the pigmy fossil elephant of Malta did not exceed the height of a pony.

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[AMBER AND HER GAOLER.]

SIR JOHN.

BY MRS. LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XIX.

Oh, is there not
A time, a righteous time, reserved in fate,
When those oppressors of mankind shall feel
The miseries they give; and blindly fight
For their own fetters, too? *Thomson.*

For some time poor Amber continued to call for help and beg to be released, but at length she realised the utter futility of such pleading, and sank into a chair, endeavouring to collect her thoughts and evolve a course of action.

That she had been thus abducted by the orders of Blair Moreland seemed to her an idea almost too stupendous for belief—and yet it was impossible to doubt the fact, after the assertion the valet had made.

She thought of her pupils, of Lady Moreland, of the stain that would rest upon her reputation because of her strange disappearance, and of her probable loss of situation in consequence, if she should ever regain her freedom, and her brain swelled almost to bursting, and she could only moan in her anguish.

After a while, however, she grew calmer, and endeavoured to command her thoughts.

The first question that occurred to her, was how to discover a plan of escape, and while she was considering this, she heard a key grate in the lock, the door softly opened, and a lighted candle was thrust into the room.

Before she could move or speak, the door was closed again and securely locked.

Amber stepped forward, picked up the candle, and proceeded to examine her prison.

It was a moderate-sized square room, furnished in the style common to first-class mansions twenty years ago. The chairs and sofa were covered with crimson damask that had lost its early vividness of colour; the floor was of polished oak, laid in a regular and pretty pattern, that looked like the finest Mosaic work; and a massive table, darkened by age, occupied the centre of the room.

There were two windows, but they were carefully guarded by a strong net-work of wire, which Amber found it impossible to detach.

Continuing her investigations, Amber noticed a door at one side of the apartment. This door stood ajar, and the girl pushed it open and passed through the aperture.

She found herself in a bed-room, furnished much

like the little parlour adjoining, but containing in addition a low French bedstead, draped with white.

There was a window to this apartment, but it was also guarded by net-work.

There was another door at the side of this chamber, opposite to the parlour, but, on trying it, Amber found it securely locked.

As the maiden's anxious glances took in all these things, her heart sank in her bosom, and she murmured:

"No way of escape! Oh! what shall I do? What shall I do?"

She seated herself in a chair in the parlour, with that despairing question upon her lips, and sobbed aloud. The tears seemed to relieve both heart and brain, and she gave way to them unrestrainedly.

All the miseries of her lot rushed over her soul in that moment, convulsing it to its centre.

Her unrequited love for Sir Ralph—the supposed fact of his speedily approaching marriage with Blanche—her lonely position in the world, and her dark future—all these things added ten-fold to her anguish at her present terrible danger.

She was suddenly aroused from her weeping by the sound of uneven footsteps ascending the stairs, and the next moment Mrs. Glosson entered the room.

"Tears, eh?" she said, setting down a little tray of food upon the table. "There's no use in crying, miss. You'll only make yourself sick, without doing yourself a particle of good. I have brought you up some supper, according to Tamley's orders before he left. He thought you might be hungry after your long ride!"

Amber made no reply.

"He said, too," continued the woman, "that you had hardly got over the effects of the chloroform he was obliged to give you, so here is some strong coffee that will soon restore you. Here's a bottle of nice wine, if you like wine!"

"I don't want anything to eat," said Amber, repressing her tears and recovering her calmness, although her lips quivered with emotion. "I cannot eat!"

"What! not the oranges, nor the toast, nor the wine? I assure you, miss, the wine is of the very best. Tamley only brought one bottle, and he called it 'green seal'."

As she spoke, Mrs. Glosson gazed wistfully at the wine she extolled.

It was evident that she had a weakness for such things.

"I cannot eat!" again said Amber.

"Very well," responded the woman. "I won't argue with you, if you don't want to eat. I'll just

leave the things, so that if you feel hungry during the night you can help yourself."

She retreated to the door and seated herself beside it, continuing:

"It's rather lonely downstairs, miss, an' if you've no objection I'll sit with you awhile. There's no use in burning two candles just yet. I s'pose you are not afraid of seeing the ghost, miss?"

"What ghost?"

"They say the Italian lady, Mrs. Claenville, walks here. This is the very room she was murdered in by her husband. You can see some blood-stains on the floor, for they ain't ever been washed out. Blood never will wash out of wood, they say!"

Involuntarily, Amber glanced at the few discoloured spots on the polished floor, which her garrulous gaoler pointed out as blood-stains.

"This was her favourite room," continued Mrs. Glosson, "and it was pretty enough before the trees grew up so thick around the windows. Her son, Mr. Claenville, liked it the best of any in the mansion. He occupied it when he was here two years ago. I shouldn't have thought he would, and his mother murdered her too! But he ain't English, if his father was! He takes after his mother's family, I suppose. He appeared to fairly hate England and the English. I didn't like his looks, I'm sure. 'Twasn't honest, like the English!"

Amber continuing silent, Mrs. Glosson, after a short pause, remarked, in a confidential manner:

"So, miss, you have the good fortune to have been fallen in love with by a live lord? He must have plenty of money, and I consider you are a fortunate young woman."

Amber was disgusted with her tormentor, but she managed to conceal her dislike as she said:

"I was brought here against my will, as you know. I was drugged so that I could not even resist. I have not fairly recovered from the weakness consequent upon the drug. Tell me whose house this is, and what it is?"

"It's the Haunted House, miss, and I'm its house-keeper. The master is in Italy. I've taken you in as a boarder, and Tamley says I'm to be paid liberal for keepin' you!"

"Mr. Moreland is going to pay you well, is he?" asked Amber, after a brief pause. "Suppose I should pay you better to let me go?"

The woman looked interested.

Amber marked the glitter of her cold, glassy eyes, and drew her watch from its pocket, displaying its enamelled case thickly set with diamonds, and said:

"This was the gift of a dear friend who is dead

but I will give it to you, chain and all, if you will set me free immediately. See! It is worth a hundred pounds!"

The old woman eyed the glittering ornament with longing eyes, but shook her head as she replied:

"Them dimuns are most likely pasto. Governesses at your age ain't apt to carry a hundred pounds on them in that shape, much less to give it away to get away from a real lord! No, miss. I can't be deceived. I'm getting well paid as I am. I know all about cheap jewellery, which my late brother used to wear a plenty, and look like a lord with it too."

"But these diamonds are real, I assure you," declared Amber. "Look at them for yourself!"

"If they are real, keep them!" returned Mrs. Glosson, in a tone meant to be sarcastic. "Real dimuns are not as plentiful as I could wish, and it's well to keep a store of them by you!"

Amber replaced her watch in her pocket with a hopeless feeling, and said, despairingly:

"If you will not free me for money, do so for the sake of humanity. You are a woman, as I am. For the sake then of our common womanhood, release me. I implore you!"

The woman smiled.

"I beseech you by the memory of your own girlhood!" cried Amber, with despairing earnestness. "I am a poor girl, with only my good name. I work for my living, but should I remain here even this one night I should lose my situation. I should not be believed when I should explain the truth. Young ladies are not carried off so often as to make my employers believe me! Even this night's captivity here will blast my reputation for life—prevent my obtaining employment—and cause me to be regarded with suspicion always. Then have pity upon me! Let me go!"

Her wild pleading brought no look of pity to the coarse face of her gaoler.

"I can't do it!" declared the woman. "It's impossible. But there won't be any need for you to go back to your situation, mind, for the young lord, as it is to be, will take care of you as if you were a queen. He wants to marry you, and take you to a fine house, where you can order your servants, and keep a carriage, and have company, and dress elegant! Tamley says my lord is that captivated he would grudge at nothing to please you, and you ought to be rejoicing instead of acting like a mad woman. It isn't every poor governess can marry a lord!"

Amber again attempted to move the heart or the capidity of her gaoler, even offering to allow her to show the watch to a jeweller, but the woman persisted in believing her diamonds' paste, and peremptorily refused to touch them.

"No, you can't get away from here!" she declared. "Bribing will do no good. I shall just mention your offer to my lord, though, and he'll pay me extra for resistin' the temptation," and she smiled. "No, I shall be firm, miss. You'll thank and reward me for it when you become 'my lady'!"

Amber shrank from the repulsive face of Mrs. Glosson, and her look of despair deepened.

It was terrible to be in the power of such a woman.

"I'll leave you now," said Mrs. Glosson, after a period of watching her lovely captive. "You must be tired and want sleep. I think I'll go to bed, too. You'd better make up your mind to your fate, miss!"

She left the room, locked the door, and Amber heard her descend the staircase, muttering as she went.

The night that followed was to Amber the longest she had ever known. She walked the floor with tortured footsteps until her limbs ached with weariness.

The candle burned down, its light going out in a sudden flare and sputter, and the morning light came in through the grated windows.

The young girl at length knelt by one of the windows, her face pressed against the strong net-work, her lovely features looking in the dim light as though carved from marble, and as the dimness of the scene grew more monotonous and dreary, her eyelids drooped and she slept.

CHAPTER XX.

Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes.
And with a virtuous visor hide deep vice!
Shakespeare.

BLANCHE LONGLEY was seated in a handsome boudoir at Sir Ralph Courtney's town house. A scheming expression was in her blue eyes and a calculating look on her fair face. She was thinking of her kind host and how to draw him on to the desired point of a proposal—a task, which, notwithstanding all her hopefulness and prospect of success, required to be conducted with the greatest delicacy and caution.

Her apartment was adorned with luxurious beauty, which well became her fair face and blonde hair, and every appearance, however insignificant, showed wealth and taste. Blanche revelled in these things, and

as she nestled on a silken couch in her favourite position, they seemed rightfully to belong to her—she looked so lovely, so gentle, so like a fairy princess.

As she sat there wrapt in meditation, a faint tap was heard upon the door, which opened, giving admittance to Jasper Longley.

"Well, how are you?" was his greeting, as he advanced towards her. "You look comfortable, I must say!"

Blanche started with surprise at his appearance, but made no effort to arise and greet him.

"Oh, it's you Jasper?" she said, languidly. "Take a seat. How are you getting along?"

"As usual," he replied, dropping into an easy chair near her. "What a pretty little den!"

He glanced around the apartment admiringly, noting the pretty French paper on the wall, the thick mossy carpet covering the floor, the silken couches and chairs, the handsome pictures, the *Sèvres* vases, the cut-glass sweet-bottles, and finally his gaze returned to the pretty figure of his sister.

"Yes, the room is lovely!" she declared, with rather more vivacity than usual. "Would you believe it? Sir Ralph had it fitted up expressly for me. He said he thought the blue forget-me-nots on the wall-paper and carpet and the blue silk furniture would be becoming to my complexion!"

Jasper arched his eye-brows.

"Indeed!" he ejaculated, depositing his feet upon a cushion. "Well, you have made progress! Why, I thought he was to be away from Courtney Hall the whole year—and yet you seem to have made a splendid impression upon him!"

"He was away," replied Blanche, "and I led the doleful sort of life with Mrs. George, the lady-housekeeper, but the other day he came home and I prevailed upon him to admit me into society."

"So he told me," said Jasper. "He called upon me this morning and said you were here. He did not know you had dropped me a note yesterday, but was polite enough to invite me to spend the season with you here, and pressed upon me a handsome loan, which I was induced to accept. From these indications, I concluded your designs were working nicely, and so came up to talk over the matter with you."

"I am glad you did," said Blanche, adjusting the lace frill at her wrists. "Did he say anything particular about me?"

"Nothing, except that you wanted to see more of the world, and all that. Has he proposed?"

"No," replied Blanche; "but then he is pretty near that point. He thinks I am the most artless and innocent girl he ever saw, yet with a depth of character and soul—"

Jasper interrupted her by a laugh.

"You play your cards well," he said. "I should like to witness one of your interviews with the baronet. You are an uncommon woman, Blanche, and it will be your own fault if you are not Lady Courtney before the season is over!"

"I shall be!" declared his sister, a look of deep resolve mantling her face. "There's no possibility of failure!"

Jasper leaned back still further in his chair and surveyed his sister critically.

"By the way, Blanche," he said, after a pause, "that golden hair of yours and your blue eyes are wonderfully taking to many men. You will be a star in the fashionable world. Have you thought that, with your face as downy, you may look higher than a simple baronet?"

"Of course, I've considered all these things," returned Blanche. "I am not likely to under-estimate myself, my dear brother. I've looked over the peerage books, and came to the conclusion that I cannot do better than marry Sir Ralph. His magnificent and unencumbered fortune, his grand, courtly air, his handsome face and stylish appearance, quite counterbalance even a grander title. Besides," she added, "I love him."

"Love him!" repeated her brother. "Is it possible? Why, Blanche, I thought you had no more heart than a fish!"

"That shows how fallible you are in your opinions," returned Blanche, quietly. "But I don't allow my heart to interfere with my plans. It is of course subservient to my head."

"I believe you there," said Jasper. "But it doesn't seem possible that you, with your innocent looks, should have had the past you have! Have you never regretted or felt sorry for sending Amber away from Courtney Hall?"

Blanche shook her head.

"Why should I?" she asked. "Have I not gained by it?"

As she said so, her blue eyes glittered, and her beauty seemed to be concealed by a mask of dangerous resolution.

Her brother regarded her with mingled pride and fascination.

"I should not like to offend you, although I am

your brother," he said, speaking out his thoughts. "Still," he added, smiling, "you may be as harmless as you look. But to consider our plans, Blanche—what do you propose to do next?"

"Give a grand party," was the reply, "and enter society under the auspices of Sir Ralph and the character of Mrs. George. I shall dress like an heiress, and attract attention."

"And then?"

Blanche's eyes sparkled as she said :

"And then Sir Ralph will fear that I shall marry some one else, and will propose without delay. I see it all, as plainly as though it had already happened. He is not quite satisfied with me—but he begins to think that his ideal is too unreal. I know I shall win him. He will never find a lovelier woman than I am, if I do say so!"

Jasper smiled strangely.

"So I should have said a year ago!" he said, carelessly. "But I had not then seen the vision of beauty that dawned upon me last evening—or rather yesterday afternoon."

"What do you mean, Jasper?" demanded Blanche, sharply, her vanity piqued by his remark. "You have seen a prettier woman than I? How did she look? Some fair Dutch beauty, I'll warrant, or else one of those swarthy brunettes—"

"Not so," said Jasper, with a tantalizing smile. "The lady I saw was scarcely seventeen, in the first flush of womanhood, with a slender, graceful figure, with fairy-like movements, and a face that would drive a saint distracted!"

"You are enthusiastic," remarked Blanche, coldly. "You give a very indefinite idea of her looks. Was she fair or dark? Describe her."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Jasper. "No description could do her justice. The faintest flush of pink stained her clear and delicate cheeks, her perfect lips were bright as scarlet coral, and her eyes were like purple pansies, but lustrous as stars, while her hair had a golden glimmer about it, as if it had been powdered with gold-dust. Her beauty was bewildering, intoxicating!"

He drew a long breath, and seemed to recall the face he had described.

"It is evident that this dainty beauty has one admirer," sneered Blanche. "Where did you see her?"

"I met her by appointment!"

"You met her by appointment?" cried Blanche, in astonishment. "Who is she? What is her name?"

"She is a governess, and her name is Amber Courtney!"

Blanche started as though she had been stung.

"Impossible!" she ejaculated. "Don't I remember how plain she was? I see—you are joking!"

"Far from it," declared Jasper. "If I always speak as truthfully as I do now, I shall be a model of goodness!"

Blanche saw that her brother was in earnest, and she became suddenly serious and startled.

"It seems strange to you, I don't doubt," said Jasper, after a pause, "but I expected it. I foresaw it. I have watched her developing into the splendid being she now is. Nevertheless, I too have been astonished at the rapid change in her appearance."

"You met her by appointment?" said Blanche, her incredulity disappearing as she marked her brother's earnestness.

"I did. I received your note in the morning, stating that you were come to town, and implying that Sir Ralph had been induced to see your worth, and so on, and I immediately wrote to Amber, requesting her to grant me an interview on particular business. She did so, and we met."

"And your business?" said Blanche, anxiously.

"Was to inform her that Sir Ralph had proposed to you, and that your marriage was soon to be celebrated. She bore the tidings as I expected—nearly fainted, but recovered herself, and then bore it in that silent, awful way that is worse than any tears or groans."

"Then she loves him yet?" inquired Blanche, her face darkening.

"Loves him?" repeated Jasper, with a frown. "She adores him. You ought to see the colour come and go in her cheeks at the mention of his name! Her head is subservient to her heart, I believe; although, to speak truth, your intellect can't compare with hers!"

"Nonsense!" said Blanche. "What cultivation has she had? She was only a child when she left Courtney Hall."

"Nevertheless, she is cultivated and refined. I dare say she has had all the benefit of being taught by the masters who attend her pupils, for she once told me that she was required to remain with them in all their lessons!"

"It is strange," remarked Blanche, pettishly, "that you could not get her to marry you—why don't you urge her?"

"I have done better than that," observed Jasper,

in a pleased tone. "I have been patient and tender, and I believe she will consent. In fact, if ever any eyes said yes, Amber's did last evening. So, you may soon have to congratulate me on my wed-ding."

Blanche's good-humour seemed to return on hearing this statement.

"I'm glad of it," she declared. "Still, you must not be so certain. If she's so beautiful, she may aim to win a title, notwithstanding the mystery about her birth."

Jasper smiled.

"I imagine," he said, "that if Sir Ralph were to behold her, his scruples about obeying his father's wish would vanish, and his ideal would be realized!"

"And she loves him?" cried Blanche, springing from her couch and bending close to her brother. "Oh, Jasper, they must not meet! Tell me where she lives!"

The dangerous expression in her eyes decided Jasper to do nothing of the kind, and he informed her to that effect, adding:

"I can take care of myself and Amber too. You have only to look out for Sir Ralph!"

"But they might meet in the street, at church—"

"There's no danger," broke in Jasper. "The girl has true delicacy and would avoid him. Besides, I defy Sir Ralph or any one else to recognize in the brilliant girl of to-day the homely, unformed child of a year ago! Do your best to hasten a marriage with the baronet, and I'll soon present you with a sister-in-law!"

Blanche returned to her couch, but with a dis-satisfied expression on her countenance.

She had prided herself upon her unusual beauty, upon her glittering hair, her soft blue eyes, her un-sunned complexion, and now to be told that her face was plain compared to the face of a being whom she had injured, filled her heart with bitter and angry feelings.

She began to feel insecure—unsafe. She had begun to attract Sir Ralph by her beauty, and was not afraid to compare herself with any of the belles of the season, but now she experienced a strange fear as she thought of the obscure Amber and pictured her as Jasper had described her.

Her brother watched the changing expressions of her countenance for several minutes, congratulating himself that he had kept Amber's whereabouts from her, and then he proceeded to give her an idea of their interview, and soon succeeded in restoring her to calmness.

"It is for my interest for you to marry Sir Ralph," he said, thoughtfully. "It is quite possible that Amber may hold out until your marriage is cele-brated. Use all your arts then, Blanche, and hurry on the affair!"

Blanche nodded in silence.

A pause succeeded, during which Jasper drummed lightly upon the arm of his chair and hummed a popular tune in the most care-free way, while his sister knitted her brows in thought.

At length she broke the silence, saying:

"I should think you might explain to me this mys-tery about Amber's parentage. Tell me who she is, Jasper—that's a good brother!"

Her caressing tone had no effect upon her relative. Artificial as he was, he liked genuineness, and well knew that Blanche's affection for him was mostly assumed, so his manner was cool, as he an-swered:

"I'll tell you all that after I'm married. Has Sir Ralph promised you a party?"

"No, but I'm sure I have but to ask for it. Do you suppose he opened his town-house to keep me in seclusion?"

She consulted her watch, and added:

"I asked him for an interview at three o'clock, and it's five minutes past. He's probably awaiting me in the study, so I must bid you adieu. I'll send you a line this evening to let you know my success, and, of course, you'll come to my party."

She arose, adjusted her costume before the mirror, and gave an admiring glance at her reflection.

"You haven't asked me if I'm coming here to stop," said Jasper, arising; "but if you had I should have said I don't know. I like the independence of chambers, but, of course, I shall call often upon you, and attend your parties and balls. Manage your interview with Sir Ralph with your usual prudence, and if possible bring him to your feet. Au revoir!"

He lifted his hat jauntily, stood beside his sister a moment before the mirror, and then took his departure.

Blanche polished her curls with her brush, gave a delicate scent to her cambric handkerchief, assured herself that her lavender robe was faultless, and then swept downstairs to the baronet's study.

CHAPTER XXL

Hail, social life! into thy pleasing bounds
Again I come to pay the common stock
My share of service, and, in glad return,
To taste thy comforts, thy pretended joys.
Thoussier's Agamemnon.

SIR RALPH was in his study, punctual to his ap-pointment, when Blanche entered, and he handed her a chair, saying, with a smile:

"I imagine that my fair cousin has a favour to ask of me. If so, she has only to speak that it may be granted!"

"How could you guess that I wanted something, Sir Ralph?" returned Blanche, sinking into the seat, with a pretty air of mock-confusion. "I shall be afraid to think, since you can read my heart so well."

The baronet replied only by a smile, and resumed his seat.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "what is it that you want, fair cousin?"

"Oh dear," sighed Blanche, "my courage is all gone. I'm almost sorry I ventured in here."

Sir Ralph believed her embarrassment to be genuine, and thought how lovely she looked, while he exerted his tact to elicit from her the object of her visit. He was soon made aware, by the prettiest acting in the world, that Blanche had a desire common to innocent and inexperienced maidens—namely, to have a coming-out party.

"It must look foolish to you," she said, hanging her head, "but I've seen so little English society, Sir Ralph, and I've read so much about it!"

"I am glad you have been frank enough to ex-press your wish," said the baronet, in his grave way, "and I shall be only too happy to grant it. In fact, Blanche, I have already spoken to Mrs. George on the subject, and if you are suited, the party shall be given in a week or so. You can send out the invitations to-morrow."

Blanche's eyes sparkled with genuine delight.

"How good you are!" she cried, grasping his hand. "How kind of you to think of my happiness. If I only knew how to repay all your goodness—"

It trembled upon Sir Ralph's tongue to ask her to become his wife, as he marked her eyelids droop and face flush under his earnest gaze, but he resisted the impulse, and said, instead:

"You overrate my attention, Blanche. I have done only a brother's duty!"

"A brother's!" cried the girl, with consummate acting. "Oh, Sir Ralph! That is," she added, ap-pearing to recover herself, "I didn't mean—excuse me—oh, what am I saying?"

She covered her face with her jewelled hands, and as the baronet looked at them he was reminded of another pair of hands, daintier and whiter—those be-longing to Amber. The reminder was but momentary, and his generous soul was filled with pity for Blanche, who had apparently so artlessly revealed her love for him.

Again the temptation beset him to offer her his hand, but the swift reflection that she had not yet gained his heart decided him, and with true delicacy he pretended to misunderstand her broken exclama-tions, and said:

"So, you think I am presuming, to call myself your brother, Blanche. Then let it be cousin. But you mustn't be too grateful for a cousinly attention. I shall be pleased to see a little company myself. I have no wish to become an ascetic or recluse, but like to entertain my friends occasionally. By the way, I called upon Jasper to-day!"

Blanche was almost choking with chagrin at the failure of her bold experiment, and her face was pale with suppressed emotion, as she said:

"So he said. He has just left me!"

Sir Ralph exerted himself to restore to his fair guest her equanimity, and soon succeeded, but a sort of constraint crept over their conversation, and Blanche soon left him, proceeding to her own chamber.

"I fear she loves me!" said the baronet, pacing to and fro, in a perturbed state of feeling, when he found himself alone. "In fact, I'm sure of it. What else could mean her glances, her blushes, her exclama-tions? What am I bound to do in the case, as a man of honour? I do not love her as I wish to love the lady who may become my wife, but I esteem her highly, and with a brotherly affection. I wish she were married to some one who would love and ap-preciate her as she deserves—the dear artless child!"

He carefully reviewed his entire conduct towards her, and even his rigid conscience acquitted him of blame in the matter of gaining her affections, yet still his thoughts lingered on the subject and he could not drive from his mind her prettily confused air.

"I must be more circumspect," he resolved. "I will watch her carefully, being guarded in my manner towards her, and if I find that her happiness is irretrievably dependent upon it I will offer her my hand. Perhaps," he added, bitterly, "all my dreams are futile. I may have pictured as my ideal wife a

woman who has no existence. And yet at times the vision haunts me of a being, all noble, all pure and all good, who would love me with a strong, all-enduring affection, who would be my wise counsellor and friend, and my loving wife—but it's only a dream."

His eyes moistened, and his noble features worked with emotion, but he collected his thoughts, musing:

"One thing is clear—Blanche, good as she is, is not the realization of my ideal. I shall probably, however, decide to marry her, if I am not flattering myself in thinking she loves me!"

The days passed quickly, and Blanche, absorbed in preparations for the *réve*, saw little of the baronet. When they met at the table, however, her manner was deprecatory and subdued, the surest way, as she knew, to touch his generous heart.

The evening assigned to the party came around, and the mansion was all ablaze with lights. Garlands adorned the walls in profusion, giving a gala air to the splendid apartments. Perfumes and music floated through the atmosphere, and every sense was charmed and delighted.

The noble guests, in gorgeous costumes, began to arrive early, and the in-rolling tide did not cease till a late hour.

Sir Ralph, Blanche, and Mrs. George—the latter, a matronly lady of excellent presence—did the honours, and Blanche quite excited the baronet's wonder by her serene self-possession, as well as charmed him by her dress.

She seemed to bloom out with a sudden splendour, and he could not choose but admire her.

Her robe was of filmy lace, dead white in hue, over a white silk slip, with a heavy white sash at her waist. Her arms and neck were bare, but lost nothing by contrast with her costume, and were further set off by a necklace and bracelets of pearls. Her golden hair shone in glossy curls, and her only head-dress was a bunch of blue violets at one side. A similar bunch nestled in the lace of her corsage.

But the baronet was not the only one to perceive her beauty or be charmed by it. Young men, with and without titles and fortunes, clustered around her like bees around a blossoming rose, and setting aside the fact that she was assistant-hostess, she was pronounced the belle of the evening.

Sir Ralph contemplated the lively scene with a great deal of pleasure. There were many among his guests whom he had not seen for years—before his studies abroad—and there were others with whom his acquaintance was brief or trivial, but owing to his tact and excellent management all were social and happy.

As he left a group of friends to move among the brilliant company, he was tapped on the arm by a jewelled fan, and turning he beheld Lady Moreland leaning upon the arm of her husband.

The Morelands had returned to town two or three days previous.

Her ladyship was attired in white moire and wore a head-dress of feathers that sparkled with diamonds. The same jewels were scattered over her neck, waist and arms so profusely that she looked as though she had been plunged into a bag of diamonds and they had adhered to her person.

Her lordship looked small and thin beside his resplendent wife, but, nevertheless, seemed to have taken courage and appeared to be enjoying himself.

It was evident that he was immensely proud of her ladyship, and he was continually on the watch to intercept admiring glances that might be cast at her.

"I hope that you are enjoying yourself, Lady Moreland," exclaimed Sir Ralph. "I haven't seen Mr. Moreland here this evening. I trust he is well!"

"He is, thank you!" responded her ladyship, in her stately manner. "He will be here later in the evening. By the way, I have something to say to you, Sir Ralph. My love," and she turned to her husband, "I will take a turn or two through the rooms with our host while you see some of your friends."

His lordship released her arm with an expression of mingled jealousy and displeasure, and looked after her portly form as she sailed off, leaning upon her handsome host.

"What a lovely creature your ward, Miss Longley, is," said her ladyship, with an expression which she meant to be arch. "Rumour says she will be Lady Courtney, so I suppose you are pleased to see what a success her *début* is. Everybody is talking about the new star that is rising upon our social circle!"

Sir Ralph smiled, and contradicted the report of his engagement to Blanche.

"Of course, you'll say so!" said her ladyship, tapping his arm again with her fan. "Men always do."

The last remark was accompanied by a smile that was intended to render the words complimentary.

"I have no present intention of marrying," re-sponded the baronet, quite gravely, as he skilfully convoyed his companion through a thicket of spreading robes. "But, to change the subject, I am quite disappointed in not seeing the Marquis of Ardencross."

here this evening. I was quite in hopes that he would come!"

"My brother is not at all well this evening," returned her ladyship. "The marchioness remained at home on his account. I am commissioned to tender you their regrets."

The baronet expressed his sorrow at the indisposition of the marquis, and her ladyship continued:

"I have a singular affair to relate to you, Sir Ralph. For a year or so I have had in my family as governess to my daughters a young relative of yours, a Miss Courtney—"

Sir Ralph started.

"Amber in your family!" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "Is it possible?"

It was her ladyship's turn to be surprised.

"Didn't you know it?" she inquired. "I supposed, of course, you did. I thought it very singular that your late father should have made no provision for her after educating her and bringing her up in luxury!"

Sir Ralph coloured, remembering his father's wish for him to marry Amber and thus endow her with fortune, and he briefly replied that he should have settled a sister's portion upon her, had she not suddenly disappeared.

"Indeed!" commented her ladyship. "She was very young, and I shouldn't have employed her, only that I knew that she would be a safe associate and governess for my girls. A mother has to be so guarded, Sir Ralph. And really Miss Courtney was far beyond her years in knowledge and steadiness!"

The baronet bowed.

"But she had another qualification, very unsuitable for a governess," said Lady Moreland. "She is, without exception, the most beautiful girl I ever saw!"

Sir Ralph smiled.

"You amuse me," he said. "My father shared the same illusion as your ladyship, and talked of the poor girl's beauty."

"But really she is," persisted Lady Moreland, as they passed beyond the range of Jasper Longley's vision, for Jasper had been anxiously watching them and wondering if her ladyship were communicating to the baronet that Amber was in her employ. "She was very plain when she came, but she has developed into a beauty. Your lovely ward, Miss Longley, is quite plain in comparison with her. Then she was graceful and fascinating, so that when my poor boy came home from India he fell immediately in love with her!"

"And so your ladyship is about to be presented with a daughter-in-law?" said the baronet, with one of his rare smiles, while his countenance beamed with joy and relief at having the mystery of the girl's fate solved. "She shall have a marriage-dowry worthy of a Courtney, Lady Moreland!"

"I don't doubt it," returned her ladyship, nervously, although inwardly wondering what could have induced Amber to leave so kind a relative, "but she refused Blair. The point at which I wish to arrive is this. Three or four days ago, while we were still at Moreland Park, Miss Courtney went out and never returned. Our inquiries have availed nothing. No one knows anything about her!"

Sir Ralph regarded her ladyship in bewildered surprise.

"Disappeared!" he repeated. "That is singular. Has Mr. Moreland no clue to her fate?"

"None. He is quite overcome by it. I have thought she may have eloped with some one. What else can I think? But why elope? She may have committed suicide—"

Sir Ralph shuddered.

"My father almost idolized the child," he said, with a broken voice; "and remembering that fact, this news is a great grief to me. I shall put forth every exertion to find her. I thank your ladyship for the communication, but must express my regret that I was not informed earlier."

They conversed further on the subject, and her ladyship spoke in warm terms of the girl's conduct while with her, and of her daughters' attachment to her.

And then, as Lord Moreland was observed following them with disconsolate glances, her ladyship rejoined her husband, and the baronet went about among his guests, but with a heavy heart.

The supper was a success, and excited hearty commendation even among that fashionable throng, and after the return from the supper-room the enjoyment seemed to wax higher.

It was then that Sir Ralph approached Blanche, offering her his arm, and said:

"My dear cousin, I have news of our lost one. Amber has—"

Blanche interrupted him by a cry of surprise, and he led her to the conservatory, proceeding with the story as told him by Lady Moreland.

It is impossible to describe the emotions that con-

vinced the heart of the girl as she listened to the recital, but she managed to conceal them from her companion, as she stood in the shadow of a blossoming orange tree, and expressed her sorrow in seemingly natural terms.

"Poor girl!" she sighed. "And how kind Lady Moreland was to take her as governess. I hope nothing has happened to her!"

"I shall search for her!" responded the baronet. "Our police-detectives are very skilful, and no doubt her fate will be discovered. But we must conceal our gloom from our guests, Blanche. Let me conduct you to your young friends!"

He did so, and left her there, devoting himself to the company, with great success, as Mrs. George was also doing.

Later in the evening, when many of the guests had departed, and the rooms were greatly thinned, Jasper approached his sister's side, and asked her how she was enjoying herself.

"Vastly," was her response. "By the way, Jasper, I've discovered one of your secrets—Amber was governess at Lady Moreland's!"

"I suspected her ladyship was making some such communication to Sir Ralph," declared Jasper, with visible annoyance.

"And that isn't all," went on Blanche, her blue eyes sparkling with pleasure at holding a piece of information of which her brother was in ignorance. "She has disappeared—"

"Disappeared?" ejaculated Jasper.

"Yes, and as near as I can find out about the time you met her by appointment!"

She narrated what she had heard, but was appalled by the look that greeted her statement.

"Gone!" repeated Jasper, his face of a livid pallor, "where can she be? Perhaps this Blair Moreland had something to do with her disappearance. I'll find her, I swear it!"

He turned abruptly and hastened from the house.

The remainder of the evening, Blanche was quite like a meteor among her guests. As Sir Ralph noticed her, he thought once or twice how speedily she seemed to have forgotten poor Amber, but he quickly made excuses for her in his own heart.

As Blanche had foreseen, her evening's success had made the baronet proud of her, and caused him to feel a deeper interest in her, and as she laid her head upon her pillow that night her heart throbbed high with anticipations of her marriage with him.

(To be continued.)

THE TURQUOISE RING.

It was a glorious autumnal evening when our tired horses ascended the forest road which led to the precincts of Redfield Hall, and halted at the summit that we might enjoy a view of the village which lay far down the slope behind us, its white spires glistening like silver in the sunset, and pointing with mute fingers to heaven, while far away stretched the shining river, on whose high banks groups of white English cottages clustered lovingly.

A wish that our future home was to be amid such scenes as these, rather than in the stately grandeur of the isolated Hall, darted through my mind, and turning to Maude, I read its echo in her wistful eyes; but our guardian was near, and we gave no utterance to our sentiments.

We were orphans, Maude and I—perhaps not in the most desolate sense of the word, but to loving, sensitive natures, there could be no greater affliction than that of losing both parents just when our tender years most needed them.

Ours had been a happy household, loving and consistent; there had been none of the light quarrels, family jars, which too often mar and destroy the perfect harmony of the household. It had been our delight to obey implicitly the first command, and that without questioning or demurring, and on all occasions our parents had consulted our tastes and feelings. My father was a clergyman of the Episcopal faith, and as such was a gentleman and scholar, and he educated us as nearly after his own refined taste as was possible; whatever fault or omission there was belonged to ourselves.

I did not on all occasions improve his teachings, much as I loved and respected him, as I should have done, and Maude was sometimes wayward and forgetful, though never disrespectful.

It was the first great sorrow of our lives, his sudden and unexpected death, contracted from a contagious fever on one of his parochial visits, and soon followed by the demise of our gentle, invalid mother, whose delicate health could not withstand the shock.

Thus at the ages of sixteen and eighteen we were left orphans; in the care of friends, indeed, and with a competence; but friends whom we had never seen, of whose existence we had seldom heard, till imperative necessity cast us into their hands.

And so far we had no occasion to complain. Mr. Sunderland, the master of Redfield Hall, whose words we now were, had come for us himself, on being notified of his old friend's death, and after settling everything in our father's affairs, took us with him to our new home.

He was a stern, silent man, older than our father, and with a military bearing at once imposing and dignified; but when he bent from his reserve, as he occasionally did to us, his manner was graceful and almost playful, and his smile was one of rare sweetness.

I felt when looking at him that some trouble gripped him close with iron fingers, for the furrows on his brow I knew were not all of age.

His wife, he informed us, was an invalid, and his family consisted of two sons, Norman and Clarence, between whom was a difference of ten years. I thought that in referring to them he spoke oftener of Clarence and that his voice lingered with a more loving accent on that name; but it might have been fancy only.

As we neared the Hall we strained our eyes through the fast gathering darkness to catch, if possible, a glimpse of our new home.

Involuntarily we sat nearer to each other, and as I looked at Maude I thought I perceived a tear drop from her golden lashes, and I knew she was thinking of all the future might bring to us.

I passed re-assuring arms around her, for I was the eldest, and had promised to fill a mother's place toward her.

We wound silently through a dense foliage for some time, and then passed through an arched gateway to the open lawn, following a carriage sweep to the east entrance of a large and imposing mansion, whose stone walls and buttresses rose looming in the night, cold and silent as the grave.

Far up, a solitary light just glimmered, and in answer to the coachman's call a couple of servants appeared with a lantern.

"Did you expect us to-night, Vance?" asked Mr. Sunderland, of the one who took our luggage; "and is all well?"

"Misses is well!" said the man in a broad Yorkshire dialect; "but Master Clarence has had another—". Here he lowered his voice, and Mr. Sunderland gave something like a groan. Just then the wide doors were flung open, and a middle-aged woman, whom I at once supposed to be the housekeeper, advanced to meet us.

"Your young ladies, Mrs. Grant!" Mr. Sunderland said, pleasantly. "I give them into your care now; see that you do them justice."

Mrs. Grant curtsied respectfully, and taking out reticules, led us through a large hall, in which lights had just been hung and up a wide staircase of polished oak and mahogany, to a suite of elegant rooms now brilliantly lighted. No one seemed to occupy them, till reaching the farthest, we stood before a very beautiful lady who reclined on cushions in the undress of an invalid. By her side knelt a young girl, busy with some medical preparation which she was trying to prevail on her mistress to swallow. Our sudden entrance startled the lady, and she assumed an upright position, so that I saw how emaciated her figure had become through long continued illness.

"My new daughters?" she said kindly, beckoning to us to stoop, when she kissed us affectionately. "I had not expected you to-night, but I am very glad I remained up later than usual and can welcome you at once to your new home, where I hope you will both be happy."

She said the last word with something like a sigh, but I felt deeply grateful for her kind reception of us, and thanked her sincerely. I was not demonstrative, but Maude's tender heart filled with gratitude, and she impulsively bent her golden head low over the thin, white hand and pressed it to her gentle lips. I saw Mrs. Sunderland's sudden look of surprise and pleasure, and knew from that moment that Maud had the first place in her heart and was glad that it was so, for my sister was my dearest self.

Let me here describe both as they then were. Later the shadow of doom rested upon one, and the dark waves of a great sorrow overwhelmed—but why anticipate?

Mrs. Sunderland must have been a woman of rare and exceeding beauty, for even then, at forty years, her cheek was smooth and white as a lily, and her auburn hair untinged with grey; but on the fair, Saxon features rested the same trace of weariness and sorrow which characterized her husband's, and I felt assured that other cause than sickness had brought on that premature decay; her fine, expressive features were in repose a look of habitual sadness painful to see.

I knew Maude did not think of this. She saw only a fair, elegant woman, suffering from a painful illness, whom it would be easy to love and care for,

who had already offered to fill a mother's place, and her soft, blue eyes "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue," filled with tears of pity for the gentle sufferer. She was remarkably lovely, her hair, of the loveliest golden hue, hanging in natural curls to her waist, half-revealing the beautiful contour of her falling shoulders and delicate bust, looped carelessly behind a perfect ear, delicately united as a sea-shell. Of medium and delicate height, I think I never saw a fairer creature than my sister Maude—when she first went to Redfield Hall. Afterwards—but again I anticipate.

We were taken to a large, comfortable bedroom, with dressing-rooms attached, furnished with old furniture of solid mahogany. A large tester bedstead, whose four immense posts terminated in lion's claws of burnished wood, stood near the centre, and elegant toilet tables were ranged around the walls, and a pleasant fire burned in a large, open fireplace, sending dancing light over the tapestried walls.

I had not been used to such elegance, neither had Maude; but our mother was a gentewoman, and we had enough of natural intuition to prevent us from appearing awkward or making mistakes before servants. So we followed the housekeeper into our luxurious rooms, and took her attentions "as to the manner born," though with that studious attention to good breeding, which our mother had taught us to use in all our intercourse with those whom society marked as our inferiors.

When we were alone we removed our travelling dresses, waiting upon ourselves or assisting each other as we had been taught to do, conversing of what we had seen meanwhile, and gratefully pleasant that our lives had fallen in such pleasant places.

I had noticed the elegance of Mrs. Sunderland's negligée, and I persuaded Maude to wear a *bârge*, of handsome finish mourning, as was befitting our recent bereavement, but allowing the fair, dimpled neck and rounded shoulders to remain uncovered. She needed no other ornaments than the jet bands and pearl ring—our mother's ring—which she always wore, and the wealth of silken hair, which, brushed and re-curled, shone like burnished gold in the brilliant lamp-light. When satisfied with her toilet I made my own.

I needed no finishing touches to adorn me; my plain bombazine, trimmed only with folds of crêpe, was made with high neck and long sleeves, finished at the neck and wrists by a full ruche of blonde; I wore my mother's watch and chain at my girdle, and a morning ring set with diamonds, a heirloom of the family, was the only jewellery I had.

My hair was dark and perfectly straight. I wore it low on my forehead, and fastened at the back of my neck with a silver arrow. I had none of Maude's beauty; my complexion was clear but dark, and my eyebrows heavy, giving a strong, marked character to my face.

I was a little taller and much more robust than she, and looked at least five years older instead of two.

When our toilet arrangements were complete, we went down the spiral staircase, pausing a moment at the first landing to admire an immense marble eagle with outstretched wings, which poised on a pedestal in an alcove, and above which hung an alabaster lamp.

Then we descended to the drawing-room door, which a servant opened, and we passed into the presence of the family.

Mr. Sunderland was sitting beside his wife, but rose to meet us as we entered, and inquired after our health, if we rested, &c., with hasty dignity; then turning, he introduced us to his eldest son, Norman, who had risen on our first entrance, and stood tall and straight as an Indian, with his arms folded on his chest.

We bowed and then shook hands with him, his manner changing not from the grave courtesy with which he first regarded us.

"I hope you like Redfield," he said, when we were seated, he still keeping his standing posture. "You could not see much of it this evening; but first impressions are something, you know."

He spoke to me, but looked at Maude.

I answered that I thought we would like it very much, or something to that effect, and then dinner was announced.

Mr. Sunderland wheeled his wife's easy chair with lover-like devotion, and Norman offered us each an arm.

Where was Clarence?

At dinner Norman sat opposite, and at different times I observed him, and through his face took an estimate of his character.

It was not favourable; his dark, swarthy features, perfectly chiselled, but sullen in their expression; his deep-set eyes were black as midnight, and as little to be trusted; and his coal-black moustache covered a mouth I felt to be cruel.

Handsome as Apollo, but cruel as Nero! I looked at his delicate lady mother, and the noble, dignified father. Not a particle of resemblance to the first, but I could see some slight likeness to Mr. Sunderland. There is alien blood in the family somewhere, I thought, and then I paid all attention to my kind hostess, and thought no more than of my dark *vis-à-vis*.

Once before the meal was concluded, Mr. Sunderland said something to his wife in a low tone, and I saw her eyelids drop, and a look of suffering contract her brow, but after a moment's thought she turned toward me and said, in a low tone, still without raising her eyes to meet mine:

"Clarence is ill; his health is not good, and of late he has had severe fits of illness which—" She stopped, flushed red, and looking in the direction her eyes were turned, I saw Norman gazing at her with the strangest expression in his eyes; then she went on: "which leaves him quite weak and very much debilitated."

There was a mystery; I felt it swooping down and encircling me with cold wings from the shadow of some unknown realm.

I shuddered, and looked at Maude.

She was talking gaily and naturally with Norman, and Mr. Sunderland was listening to them with a more cheerful expression of countenance than I had yet seen him wear, and I noticed a greater change in the young man; his swarthy cheek was lit up to a deep red, and his eyes were softer and more dangerous.

Maude's pure, innocent face shone lovelier from the dark foil of his.

We returned, not to the large, stately drawing-room, but to one cosier and less imposing, to which, an hour later, the servants were summoned to prayers. There were a great many of them and they took their seats in respectful silence, while the master read aloud the lessons for the day.

Maude and I listened and thought of the olden time now for ever past, in the dear parsonage in Wales, and of the two lonely graves there. The tears would flow, but we felt better for them, and knelt with happier hearts to our devotions.

Then we bid Mrs. Sunderland good-night and this time she kissed us both, though she said "my child" to Maude; we shook hands at parting with Mr. Sunderland, and went with Mrs. Grant to our chamber, who lingered to see us comfortable.

Norman had left the room before prayers, nor did we see him again that night.

We saw that our door was secure, then undressed, and after saying our prayers together, as we had done since infancy, extinguished our light and laid down to rest.

We talked over the events of the evening for a short time, and then Maude's answer became drowsy, and soon her full, deep breathing told she slept; I was trying to account for the uncertain, troubled look the family had, wondering at the illness of Clarence, and finally drifting comfortably into the shadowy realms of dream-land, when I was at first startled, then horror-struck by a cry—the loudest, most unearthly and fearful I ever heard, which rang with a muffled sound, yet terribly distinct, through the perfect silence of the house.

I dared not speak to Maude; my heart beat with a deep, loud thump that threatened to suffocate me, and I sat upright, staring with protruding eyes into the thick darkness that seemed quivering with that awful cry.

CHAPTER II.

It was not repeated. There was a sound of feet hurrying through the hall and corridors, and a faint murmur of voices, amongst which I thought I could distinguish Norman's, and then silence dead and unbroken.

Maude had slept through it all, and I laid down trembling and numb with fright, scarcely daring to close my eyes, or relax my strained nerves, lest that terrible cry should again break forth; but at last, overcome by mental fatigue and the evening's excitement, I dropped asleep, nor woke till the sun shone bright and clear through the half-closed shutters. Maude's sweet voice was the first sound I heard.

"Alice! Alice!" she was saying, "do get up, dear; we shall certainly be late to breakfast; it is an hour since the bell rang, and Mrs. Grant has knocked twice at our door!"

I sprang up wide awake, but with troubled, confused sense of something wrong.

It gradually came back—the fright of the preceding night—that terrible cry, and the indistinct sounds I had heard; and I felt as if it were all a troubled dream, especially as when I questioned Maude she laughed at me, and said it must have been a nightmare.

That it was not, but a veritable reality, I knew; but as the memory grew more indistinct in the

bright glare of day, I concluded to think no more of it, and perhaps time would develop the mystery.

I thought perhaps there would be some explanation of it at the breakfast-table; but the family bore no appearance of being disturbed in any unusual way, indeed I thought both our guardian and Mrs. Sunderland seemed more cheerful than on the preceding day; and Norman, who came in late, had an exhilarated air and a good appetite which precluded the idea of any nocturnal adventure.

When breakfast was finished, he asked us to ride with him and see the country, promising to take us down to the village on our return.

Mrs. Sunderland persuaded us to go, remarking:

"I hope Clarence will be well enough to join you in a few days; he is much better now."

I was looking at Norman when she spoke, and I saw his lip curl with a sarcastic grimace.

"Has he been long ill?" I inquired of Mrs. Sunderland.

"No!—that is—not very long. We used to think him infallible until these late attacks."

Her voice died into a whisper and she looked distressed.

Norman left the room to order the horses, we went to our room to prepare for the ride, and nothing more was said.

It was a very pleasant ride; we sat in an open barouche with our faces to the horses, while Norman sat with his back to the driver, and pointed out every spot of interest.

The road was wild and picturesque, of that type of scenery so peculiar to England, and the woods had put on their autumnal splendour in the highest degree.

The deep red and yellow of the birch and oak stood out in beautiful contrast to the solemn green of the pines, and the only sound on the still, hazy air, was the dull ringing of the woodman's axe, or the musical call of some distant bird.

Looking earnestly at a clump of bushes we were slowly passing, I saw something flutter that was too vivid a scarlet for the foliage. I had just turned Maude's attention to it, when a woman slowly arose from the spot to a commanding stature, and with one arm outstretched, pointed a warning finger toward us. For one moment she stood, tall, dark, majestic, still and silent as a statue; then slowly retreated—I had almost said vanished—from sight, not even the flutter of her scarlet cloak being visible. I turned to Norman—astonished and incredulous at the sudden apparition, and was surprised at the wrathful expression on his face.

"Some idle, wandering gipsy," he said interpreting my look. "I do wish the law would exterminate the whole tribe, they are a miserable, thievish set."

"But what a romance there is about them!" I said, in answer to this outburst. "What a fine picture that woman made, standing with the dignity of Cleopatra, before the back-ground of dark pines. Have you many of them here?"

"Yes!—no!—that is, they are here sometimes, then off again. Don't imagine any romance about them, Miss Wiley, or you will be sadly disappointed."

Just then we approached the village and the subject was dropped; but I could not help thinking of the dark woman's sudden appearance and the lowering face of Norman. I could almost imagine I saw a likeness between them, but thought how absurd was the idea.

We drove past beautiful farm cottages surrounded by the inevitable hedge, and admired the groups of flaxen-haired children in the doorways to whom Norman threw a few pence, which were eagerly scrambled for: than we stopped at the post-office to get the Redfield mail. Norman was by this time in high spirits chatting merrily with Maude and me.

We did not get out of the carriage, but were close to the window and could see a pretty girl within who waited on persons getting letters. Norman soon got the mail; but he lingered talking to the girl, who seemed to be arranging or expostulating with him about something, till the uneasy prancing of the high-spirited horses, which the coachman with difficulty held, recalled him to us. I saw the girl come to the window, and her eyes looked as if she had been crying. We drove off and left her standing there, looking after us.

When we got home we went directly to our room, and laid aside our things to prepare for dinner.

Maude was not ready so soon as I, and wishing to see Mrs. Sunderland a few moments, I went downstairs and entered the library—an immense room at the end of the long hall.

No one was there but Norman, who stood with his back to the door, tall and stately, but with more grace than I had ever seen him assume.

He turned at my step, and disclosed the features of a stranger.

And yet the fair Saxon face so like his mother's,

the mouth whose perfect contour and remarkable sweetness lent a charm to the whole face, and the deep blue eyes so bright and clear, in such remarkable contrast to the black hair. I knew it was Clarence Sunderland who stood before me.

For a moment he looked at me as if in doubt or surprise; then coming forward, took my hand, and said:

"Miss Wiley? Am I not right? I am very glad to see you. I wish I had not been ill the day you came, so that I could bid you a brother's welcome to Redfield."

Perhaps it was because I never had a brother, or the old tones of affection that I heard so seldom of late, but my eyes swam in tears at his kind tone, and I blushed like a schoolgirl at his address.

He did not wait for me to speak, but leading me to a seat, went on talking.

"You will find it very lonely here, I am afraid. My mother's health is very poor, and mine, that used to be so robust, is failing fast. Oh, Miss Wiley, I sometimes think we are under a spell here!"

I looked at him, and saw what ravages illness had made in a splendid form and face, and tried in vain to define the sudden thrill which made me lower my face before the earnest gaze of his.

He held up his hand, on the fourth finger of which a ring hung loosely.

"I am getting so thin!" he said. "The sybil who wished that ring on my finger could hardly force it on. Now see!"

He held his finger downward and the ring dropped off and rolled away on the carpet. I sprang from my chair and picked it up. It was a turquoise of most singular design. And was it fancy, or did it really flash forth a lurid gleam as my hand touched it? I thought I had never seen a more remarkable jewel, and said so as I handed it to Clarence.

"It has a singular history," he said. "I will tell you of it sometime, but not to-day; I am not in the mood."

Just then Maude entered in search of me. I introduced my sister, with pardonable pride at her unmatched loveliness. Why, then, was I not satisfied when I saw Clarence's look of undisguised admiration? Is not human nature always a paradox?

The days passed swiftly and pleasantly away, till another attack of illness confined Clarence to his bed; at the same time his mother was taken dangerously ill and lay for days motionless, with fixed eyes, on the low couch in her chamber, beside which her husband sat as in a stupor.

Maude and I were assiduous in attendance on the sick lady, whom we tenderly loved; her only attendant was the girl whom we had seen on our first arrival, and neither Maude nor myself ever liked her.

She was a sly, still person, with a cat-like step, and I often wondered at Mrs. Sunderland's confidence in her.

She prepared all the medicines which the doctor left on his occasional visits, and pretended to have great skill in pharmacy; but I doubted her, and often wished to speak of it to Mrs. Sunderland. Would that I had!

One night she seemed a great deal worse, and Mr. Sunderland started to the nearest town to procure a physician, the one practitioner at Redfield being away on business which might detain him a week.

I saw that she needed a change of medicine, and made up my mind to prevent, if possible, her taking another draught till the arrival of the new doctor.

For this end I seated myself by the bed-side, with the night lamp arranged so that I could read to keep me from being drowsy.

Lola, the girl, had taken a particular dislike to me; but she did not make any denunciation of it.

On this night, however, she interfered so much with my plan that I was obliged to call upon the housekeeper to correct her, which she did by giving the girl a sharp reprimand in my presence.

I saw the lurid light in her half-shut eyes; but I had gained my end for dear Mrs. Sunderland's sake, and now we consulted her, as we had the dear lady said.

She had rested better latterly, and when the hour for her medicine had passed without taking it, she seemed more composed than for some time.

I directed Lola's attention to this, but she would not notice it, feeling indignant at my assumption of her prerogative.

At last Mrs. Sunderland unclosed her eyes, that had of late looked dull and faded, and fixed an attentive gaze on Lola, who seemed not to like the scrutiny, for she moved uneasily, and at last approached the bed, and bent with apparent tenderness over the invalid.

Mrs. Sunderland made a gesture of distrust, I thought, and beckoned her away, then closed her eyes wearily and slept.

An hour later she awoke, refreshed and much better. I had given her some nourishment which I myself prepared, never leaving her for a moment, and she

was conversing easily with me as I sat by her bed, holding one fair, fragile hand in my strong ones, and listening to her praises of Maude—who was like a dear youngest child to her, and at that time taking a brief rest that she might share the fatigues of the night with me—when like some horrible nightmare, or the drowning cry of a man, or the wail of a soul in agony, that fearful, haunting cry, rang through the room.

At the same instant the lamp was suddenly extinguished, and wild with terror I ran from the room into the hall beyond, just in time to receive the fainting form of Maude, who sank into my extended arms.

CHAPTER III.

I CAME AS near fainting myself as ever I did in my life, and it was only on Mrs. Grant's assuring me that it was nothing—"only Master Clarence in one of his spells"—that I became conscious that I had deserted my post so easily.

I hurried back to the room, leaving my trembling sister with the housekeeper, and found it deserted.

A strong current of air swept through it from a window that had been left open for ventilation, and stirred the white drapery of the couch; but Mrs. Sunderland lay perfectly still, with closed eyes.

Could she have slept after hearing that unearthly cry, or was she accustomed to the sound?

I lifted her hand gently; it was nerveless and cold, and her white lips were closed never to open.

My cries of remorse and anguish brought the whole household, just as Mr. Sunderland returned with the medical man. Over his grief I cannot linger; it was too dreadful.

It did not seem as if the household could ever become as it had been; yet, after a few weeks, everything returned to its original course, except that all gaiety was banished from among us.

Clarence had again recovered from the sickness which must soon, if repeated, waste intellect and strength, and devoted his time to his father, who seemed thoroughly broken down, while Maude and Norman were constantly together, and I was left to myself or to the chance company of Clarence.

And now I had a secret—a secret even from my sister, who now, alas! no longer held the first place in my heart.

Yes! I had learned what sooner or later every woman must—to love; and my idol, my hero, was Clarence Sunderland.

And I knew well that he did not, could not, love me; he talked to me, but he looked at Maude; he was gentle kind, almost loving in his regard for me, but he held Maude's hand and looked deep into her lovely eyes, and praised her mirth or singing as he never did mine; he could well let her spend her time with Norman, for he was her brother almost.

The two brothers had little love for each other. Clarence, calm and courteous to all, could hardly tolerate the supercilious arrogance of the elder brother, or the want of respect to their father, and bitter quarrels sprang up between them when Norman's arrogance aroused even Clarence's ire, and stormy scenes would ensue, to which the elder brother would retire dark indigo, which not even Clarence seemed to understand. Only his generosity and forbearance prevented an open break between them.

There was but little change or excitement in the house since Mrs. Sunderland's unexpected death. Lola had disappeared that night, and no trace of her could be found. It was supposed that she fled in terror, and dared not return. At all events her presence was not again at the Hall.

Mrs. Grant took the head of the table, and at all times made one of the family. She was a thoroughly respectable woman, who had lived many years with Mrs. Sunderland, to whom she came upon the death of Mr. Sunderland's father, having been brought up in the family; our guardian had great respect for her, and now we consulted her, as we had the dear lady said.

Occasionally a stray visitor came to the Hall, not often. It seemed to me that its gloomy precincts were banished, so deep a mystery hung over the family. Once I spoke to Mrs. Grant about it, but she peremptorily forbade me ever again alluding to it. Whatever she knew she was worthy of the trust. The winter passed away without any particular incident, and the foliage and grounds around the old Hall rejoiced in the beauty of spring.

I was greatly changed since my residence at Redfield, and sometimes I longed to take Maude and go far away from its torturing gloom and mystery, and above all from Clarence Sunderland, whom I saw daily wasting beneath my eyes, from a singular and unknown malady.

Maude, too, was changed; her light-heartedness was gone, and the ringing laugh or the merry song was never heard from her lips.

The atmosphere of that place had done what all our former trouble had failed to do—completely subdued her spirits.

One evening I put on my garden hat, intending to take a long walk by myself; I had no idea of prolonging it as I did, until the spires of Redfield village were in sight.

Then I bethought me that I was expecting a letter from our dear old home, and I went on to the post-office.

I had been there frequently of late, and got up an acquaintance with pretty Jessie, the young girl who was clerk for her father.

She told me she was an only child, and I knew she was an idolized one, for her father was a widower, and quite an old man.

I could not account for the grief which was wearing her away, and which showed itself more plainly every time I saw her.

The only time she seemed to brighten was when I went accompanied by Norman, and it had occurred to me that she had loved "not wisely, but too well"—had, in fact, lifted her regards to the heir of Redfield. I felt sorry for her doomed happiness, and always treated her with sisterly regard, never heeding the difference in our relative positions.

That evening, when I left the office and found it getting dark, I blamed myself very much for being so far from home at that late hour, and made all the speed I could getting back.

I had nearly accomplished the distance, and was far up the steep hill which led to the Hall, when I heard voices in conversation in the deep underwood which grew close to the road.

My heart stood still with fear; but I regained my composure somewhat, when the next moment I recognized Norman's deep bass tones.

Who was he talking to? Some workmen probably. I parted the bushes, and had almost come close upon them, when I perceived that his companion was a woman.

A woman, but stranger still, it was the mysterious-sibyl who had appeared so like a scarlet apparition on the day of our first drive with Norman, when he had denounced her tribe with such vehemence. And now she was in deep and earnest conversation with him, her dark face close to his, and her uplifted finger pointed in solemn gesture toward the Hall.

She had once been a handsome woman; some traces of beauty yet remained on her dark face, but evil passions and a life of lawlessness and unrestraint had nearly effaced it.

Still there was a wild, weird sort of beauty in the picturesque attitude and dress—the scarlet short cloak and the handkerchief bound over her dark hair, the majestic grace of her stately form and the fire-flashing eye. She was quite imposing in her appearance, that dark queen of the gypsies.

Norman stood confronting her with lowering brow and stormy features. I saw there was war between them, and supposed he had been ordering her in his arrogant manner off the grounds.

I was about to speak, to attract his attention, when her voice silenced me, and the words which followed chilled me with horror. With her hand extended in malediction, she cried:

"No! no! no! you don't know me, Norman Sunderland, if you think I will fear now; I hate his ugly face and smooth tongue! I hate her because she loves him, and I have vowed to exterminate them, root and branch; and this little one—this white Lily, as you call her—she shall suffer, too, as I have done, all these long years. I will not spare her to soften your heart and make you turn coward!"

"But I love her," Norman said, while I stood faint and dizzy in the gathering night, not daring to move. "You must not harm Maude, for she must be my wife; neither heaven nor earth shall prevent that; and you shall not harm her—dare not, remember!"

Maude, did he say? Oh, my poor sister!

"Bah!" retorted the woman, with a fiendish smile;

"how many have you loved before? Where is your other?"

"Hush!" cried Norman fiercely; "don't dare to mention that! And now about what we were speaking of; you are slow at your work, it seems to me."

"No! no!" replied the sibyl, shaking her head; "I want my vengeance to work slowly; let him suffer year by year, as I have done, and count the weeks by such reckoning of pain till he can bear no more and live. Let him sit in his fine mansion, and among his riches, while I am poor and forsaken, and let him see his idols wasting away, one by one, before his eyes. Did I not tell you that that ring came to me from the spirits? Let the fair-haired darling wear it; it is a pretty trinket for the youth."

Her tone died into a sneer, and she beat a ringing beside her until the top was in her hand. The noise of the rattling bush gave me a chance to escape.

Quick as the wind I rushed from the spot, and like

wild thing darted through the shrubbery of the lawn into the Hall. Fortunately I met no one, and I hastened to my room and locked myself in.

Then I commenced to think; what unhallowed influence was at work that made that regal Hall a cursed place, and turned the very sunlight into darkness ere it reached its walls. I looked back and saw how Maude and I had both changed since we came to live in that saddened atmosphere.

How mystery, and then death, almost as mysterious, had entered its walls—how doubt and dissimilarity and hatred darkened the intercourse of those nearest and dearest by ties of blood.

What terrible spell was at work? Was I about to unravel the mystery? The ring—the ring. I remembered that peculiar gem—I had often noticed its strange brilliancy on that wasting hand. Now I had a clue.

Then I felt reconciled to Maude's love for Clarence, as if expressed as it had been, so that no word or look on her part had ever revealed it to me, her sister.

But what young girl of loving heart and sensitive feeling could be in daily intercourse with Clarence Sunderland and not love him? And surely all his kind attentions, his earnest looks, and devoted proofs of affection were not without an answering welcome?

Oh, happy Maude, if blessed with his love! I would have died twice to win it in my sinful idolatry.

Sitting there in such an exciting whirl of thought, I felt a faint clue to the mystery.

I flushed upon me suddenly, and I determined to set upon it at once.

If Clarence was in the power of any evil, I would save him. I determined to say nothing of Maude. I would spare her from suffering as long as I could; but I would save Clarence from a dreadful doom.

That night we two chance to meet in the library alone.

I did not dare to trust myself in his presence often, for I dreaded the weakness that led me to treasure every syllable his dear lips uttered, and I kept aloof; but now I went up to where he sat, by the low French window, and said carelessly:

"You promised once, Clarence, to give me the history of that ring. Tell it to-night; I am just in the mood to hear a story with a tinge of romance."

He made room for me on the broad seat, but did not immediately answer my address.

I repeated what I had said.

"The ring?" he said, absently, looking dreamily into my face until I blushed in spite of myself. "Oh yes, it has a story, but a very brief one. I will tell it if you wish."

"It was about a year and a half ago," he began, "that I was riding home from a hunt over the mountains, and was jogging slowly along by a forest road, when all at once, as if risen from the ground, the strangest, wierdest looking creature stood up directly before my horse's head, and frightened both the animal and myself severely; the horse reared and plunged, trampling the woman—for it was a woman—under foot, till by a desperate effort I controlled him; but she was in a fearful passion, as I could see by the glitter of her wild eyes, and the maledictions she heaped upon me were long and loud; very suddenly, however, she changed her tone, and fumbling in a side pocket of her crimson outer garment, produced this turquoise, which she begged me to accept and always wear on the third finger of my left hand, for 'luck.' Thinking her demented, I gave her its value in silver, and humoured her whim by wearing the ring, which she wished on. I am not superstitious, but I am half tempted to throw it into the fire sometimes, for my 'luck' seems to have been evil ever since that, though of course the ring is not to blame. There, Alice, that is the story."

"Quite a romance," I said, trying to speak at my ease; "but I wish, Clarence, you would give me the ring."

I did not think of any inappropriateness in my speech, I was only trying to accomplish a great end. But a sudden flush in Clarence's eye made me wish I had not said it.

He spoke quickly.

"If I dared! Oh, Alice, if I dared to ask you to wear my ring, not now, but always, Alice—dear Alice! Give me one little hope!"

I looked at him as if in a dream! Had I misunderstood him! Are those blessed words for me! No! I tried to look stern—indignant, as I murmured:

"Maude?"

"Dear Maude," he said, "she has encouraged me to hope. She said you were not entirely indifferent; that loving me as a brother you might learn to love me dearer. She has kept my secret. Alice, I love you—be my wife—at least, promise to love me, dearest."

And this was for me—for me who had wept over a dreary, loveless life in the future, and cherished one image as a miser does his gold!

I was betrothed with the turquoise ring.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR a few weeks I rejoiced in my new happiness, and received the congratulations and caresses of Maude, who was delighted at my betrothal with Clarence and laughed merrily when I told her how I had believed her to be his beloved instead of me; but when I playfully hinted that she certainly was inclined to be an old maid, she astonished and dismayed me by a passionate burst of tears, and then, to my utter astonishment and terror, confessed to an idolized love for—shall I say it—Norman!

A pang of bitter self-reproach ran through me at the announcement. I thought of his stern, tyrannical temper, his evil and mysterious complication with that strange woman, the pale and suffering Jessie, who, perchance, had been misled by her affection, and of my mother's death-bed charge to me. How had I fulfilled it? I wished bitterly that we had never seen Redfield, never come within the unhallowed influence that made it desolate; and I begged by every means in my power that Maude would give up her as yet unknown love for Norman ere he solicited it in return for his own; for I saw now with recently-opened eyes that his was no brotherly preference, but a passion deeper than life itself. In vain I promised to tear myself from Clarence for ever, and go far away to some quiet home, where we could be as we once had been, but Maude smiled at what she termed my delusion.

"We can be happy here," she said; "there is no harm in loving, and all this mystery will wear off in time. Clarence is much better now, but you are making yourself ill conjuring up such fancies. Dear Alice, do let us be happy while we can. I know Norman loves me better than life itself, why cannot I return his love? Is he not good and noble, if not so tender as Clarence in his ways?"

"Good! noble!" I thought of his meeting with the gipsy sybil, of the dark suggestions that had struck terror to my heart, and instinctively I looked at my betrothed ring.

Was it fancy, or did the moonlight shimmering over it cause it to dart forth tongue of fire, and to gleam at me with a hundred burning eyes, while pains of intense fierceness darted through my burning veins, and strange hallucinations filled me with terror. I grasped Maude to prevent myself from falling, and then everything was a blank.

When I awoke again to reason and consciousness, it was with the ringing of that fatal cry in my ears, and its accents on my tongue, while my frame quivered as if in the agony of dissolution, and my parched and swollen tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I was alone when I unclosed my eyes, but instantly Mrs. Grant and Maude were beside me. I could see they were shivering with terror, but they were very thankful to see that I knew them.

"And now lie still and ask no questions," said Mrs. Grant, in a commanding tone, "in a day or two you will be better, and we will tell you all."

And they did; at least, all they knew. I held the secret, and I determined at once that it should perish for ever. The fatal illness which was to destroy Clarence had been transferred to me with its cause.

They were all so kind, so eager to restore me to perfect health, that I found it difficult to escape from them for a moment. When I did, I hastened to the river, and standing on its pebbly bank, drew from my finger the turquoise ring and dropped it deep into the rippling tide. The water seethed and boiled as it sank with a gurgling sound, and as I turned to go, a friend's laugh echoed through the spot.

As I passed through the shrubbery I saw Norman and Maude walking together, with arms interlaced and heads bent in earnest conversation.

I needed only one glance to assure me that now, at least, they were betrothed lovers.

Weeks passed away, and at least a part of the curse was lifted from Redfield Hall. Clarence improved rapidly in health and spirits, and even Mr. Sunderland was happier to see his favourite son restored, but Norman was darker, fiercer, and more despotic than ever. Even Maude herself could see it, but she was fascinated, and sacrificed all things to love's despotism.

Norman had never spoken to me of his love for my sister, nor to his father and brother, while they both knew and approved of the engagement existing between Clarence and myself. I thought it singular, and urged upon Maude the propriety of making it known to our guardian; but she was too willing to leave it all in Norman's hands, in whom she placed perfect confidence.

I have said that an attachment had sprung up between the postmaster's daughter, pretty Jessie, and myself. I saw her often, and each time was startled by the change in her appearance, and the utter dejection and misery of her whole aspect. I had attributed it to Norman in some way or the other, but the whole dark scheme of villainy I had not even surmised.

One evening she sent word by one of the servants of the Hall that she would like to see me very much. It was not late, and the extreme urgency of the message decided me to go at once. I told Maude where I was going, and requested her, if I should be detained beyond a certain hour, to send a servant for me.

I had often spoken to her of my interest in Jessie, but when once I hinted my suspicions that Norman had trifled with her affections, Maude's indignation and refusal of the charge silenced me.

I found the young girl pacing her room in a storm of grief and despair. As soon as I entered she threw herself at my feet.

"Oh, Miss Alice!" she said, wildly, "help me! Tell me what shall I do?"

"Why, Jessie, child! what is the matter?" I asked, astonished at her manner, for she was in a paroxysm of tears; "you are ill and suffering; what can I do for you?"

"Oh, Miss Alice, it is about your sister, about him, Norman Sunderland!"

It was coming, as I feared, but how different!

"Yes!" she went on, wringing her small, wasted hands, through which the blue veins shone with sickening distinctness, "I must tell you now before it is too late; I must save your beautiful, innocent sister from a dreadful fate. Norman Sunderland is a villain! a traitor to his kindred! and a deceiver! And I, Miss Alice, I—oh God! am his wife!"

I started as if a shot had penetrated my heart, and catching her hands in mine, held her while I looked earnestly into her face, pale but beautiful, and said:

"You, Jessie, the postmaster's daughter! you his wife! you Norman Sunderland's wedded wife, and the mistress of Redfield!"

"Ay," she replied, sadly, "I am his wedded wife, but the mistress of Redfield never!"

"And my sister Maude?" I groaned sadly.

"She must be saved!" Jessie said. "It is for her I broke a solemn vow, braved his terrible anger, and exposed the man I loved better than life."

"And yet he is false!" I said, cruelly probing a wound.

"He knows," she continued, unheeding my words, "that he cannot defy the laws here to effect his crime; he must fly from the country and take Maude with him. I fear that he has prevailed on her to consent, by such specious reasons as I know too well are at his command, and they only wait a suitable chance to effect it."

I started to my feet in a sudden agony of suspense and shame.

"To-night, Jessie," I cried wildly, "will they attempt to accomplish it to-night? Oh, my poor, misguided sister!"

"I think it will not come so soon, Miss Alice, but perhaps you had better return; I will accompany you, and we will take Rover for protection."

"But you will have to return alone, Jessie; will that be safe, even with a good dog like Rover?"

"I do not care for myself; I only wish I was in my grave. I would be but for thoughts of my poor father. He does not know how I have deceived and betrayed the trust he put in me."

"I can take you a nearer road," she said, as we started homeward; "it is directly across the fields, and through the edge of that slip of woods; we are quite safe with Rover by our side."

Gipsies! how my heart beat at the word! We could see their camp-fires as we gained the outskirts of the wood, and it was something more than curiosity that led me to cast aside fear and creep noiselessly to within a few feet of the group, while Jessie walked on to prevent the dog from betraying our vicinity.

There were a great many men and women of the tribe assembled around large fires, cooking their evening meal, while others stood aloof, leaning against trees, or playing with children tawny and ragged, while a few of the most important looking were gathered about a tall, majestic woman in scarlet drapery, which hung in graceful festoons about her large, well-shaped limbs, while a tinsel crown with innumerable shining bells rested on her forehead and confined the masses of her dusky hair.

She leaned in a graceful, picturesque attitude upon a rifle which she held clasped in her large, symmetrical hands, and talked earnestly to her followers. I recognized her instantly, but I could not understand one word of the discourse. It was in a foreign tongue, and an unknown one to me.

One figure of the group attracted my attention, and I tried to define where and when I had become familiar with it; but I could not remember.

It was a female, evidently young, but her back was toward me. At length she turned, and as the fire-light shone full upon her face, for the first time since that dreadful night of Mrs. Sunderland's death I saw Lola.

When I overtook Jessie we continued our walk in

silence. The sky had overclouded and a light rain was falling, causing us to hurry our steps till the lights from the Hall gleamed full upon us.

Then Jessie was about to return, but I insisted on her spending the night, assuring her that she would see no one but the housekeeper and myself. I wanted to talk to her further, and it was not a fit night for her to return home, where she would not be missed until morning.

I at last prevailed upon her to remain, and entering a side door, hastily conducted her to Mrs. Grant's own room, who took willing charge of the hapless girl.

It was a brief reprieve to see Maude engaged in reading to Mr. Sunderland in the library, while Norman quarrelled with Clarence over a game of chess. Sitting beside our reserved, melancholy guardian, Maude, in her silver tissue with white rose-buds in her golden hair, looked like an angel of beauty and goodness.

They were safe there for the present—she was safe until I could conduct Mr. Sunderland to Jessie, and there tell him the whole story, and secure his aid to save Maude from certain ruin.

When I entered the library, Norman rose, and gave me his place at the board. I sat down, and commenced arranging the men.

Clarence looked at my hand, and for the first time he missed the turquoise ring.

"What has become of it?" he whispered. "Are you sorry that you entered into the compact, and discarded the seal?"

"It is a weird thing," I said, assuming a lightness I did not feel, "and I am afraid of it. You must give me another in its place, that has no sybillic associations."

"I will, dearest," whispered Clarence, leaning over to take one of my men, "and it shall be of the purest virgin gold, and the seal of a compact to last while life does. Oh, Alice, your love has made me very happy."

These were sweet words to me; but when I looked up to see if they were overheard, I met the eyes of Norman fired with a baleful light.

I shuddered, for I feared him. I had not disguised my suspicion from him, and always shunned any approach to familiarity since that night when I witnessed his meeting with the gipsy sybil, and learned to distrust him.

Now my dislike was deepened into positive hatred when I reflected that she who was his lawful wife was a hidden guest in the house of which she should be mistress.

Perhaps he read my thoughts, for he left the house a few minutes after, and did not return that evening.

That night when we knelt in family devotion my heart went up in prayer for the suffering and erring beneath that roof, and for light to dispel the mystery which seemed to envelop us like a cloud. I felt my sister's hand tremble as I clasped it in mine, and when we rose I saw that her face was bathed in tears. I told her I was not going to retire just then, and asked her not to wait for me.

She came and kissed me good-night with unusual tenderness, and then pressed her lips to our guardian's brow, as was our custom each night. Now she lingered, smoothing his grey hairs with her childish fingers.

"You are a good girl," he said kindly: "good children, both of you, and a great comfort to me in my sad old age, and I am but poor company for any one."

We both disclaimed this, and then Maude went out, but her steps were languid and I wondered what made her unhappy.

When she was gone I told Mr. Sunderland all I had to say in as brief a manner as possible and then led him into the presence of Norman's wronged and deserted wife.

Mr. Sunderland's grief turned to the sternest indignation when he heard her story of all she had suffered and endured in silence and in secret; of the deep and specious arts by which he had won her to consent to a secret marriage, which she knew to be legal, and by her produc[t] of her marriage certificate, dispelling any vestige of doubt which might have lingered.

The unfortunate father seemed overcome by the treachery of his eldest son. He groaned and wept aloud in bitterness, till Jessie, forgetting her own sorrow, knelt and implored him to be calm; but his only answer was:

"It is right! it is just! but my punishment is more than I can bear! Oh, Yuba, your vengeance might be satisfied now!"

At that moment I heard the quick gravelly sound of distant carriage wheels, and like a flash the truth struck me.

I ran to my own room; Maude was not there. I looked in the closet; her clothes were gone. On the dressing-table lay a note directed to me in her handwriting, but I never read it.

Like a person suddenly bereft I flew to Mr. Sunderland and gasped forth:

"They are gone—quick! quick! and we can save her yet!"

Mr. Sunderland sprang down the stairs to interrogate the servants.

They knew nothing of it; but on examination the fleetest horses in the stable were gone, and a light, covered carriage with them. The driver must have been a stranger.

It was the work of a moment for Mr. Sunderland to spring on a saddled horse, and accompanied by his trusty groom, ride after the fugitives, while we returned to the house, a melancholy, helpless group, to await in breathless silence their return.

Twenty minutes passed, perhaps more. We listened with senses fearfully strained for the sound of returning wheels, when there rang out clearly and distinctly the sharp crack of a rifle, followed by a cry of anguish.

We ran out into the open space in front of the house—Mrs. Grant, Jessie and I—and could hear distinctly the sound of voices and the tramp of returning feet, mixed with the grating of carriage-wheels. A servant preceded us with a lantern, and we went to meet the returning party with a fearful presentiment of evil.

They came near and the man held up his lantern. We could see by its light three men bearing on a litter, hastily constructed from the carriage-seats, a fourth mortally wounded.

With one quick spring Jessie rushed past me and reached the litter, compelling them to pause a moment, while she bent over the wounded man in speechless, tearless agony. Then they passed on to the Hall.

Within the carriage lay my sister Maude, white and insensible; I was glad at that moment that she was so.

Maude was carried upstairs and laid on his own bed; the blood oozed slowly from a deep wound in his breast, and his eyes were closed as if he were insensible. A doctor was sent for, though we all knew he was dying then. Clarence and Mr. Sunderland did all they could to ease his suffering, but he only groaned and turned away from them. I stood near gazing upon him in silent fear, while Mrs. Grant was trying to restore my unconscious sister, and we all waited anxiously for the doctor from Redfield.

Jessie supported him on her arm, but he had not spoken to or recognized her, and the unfortunate girl looked the picture of anguish and unspeakable grief.

Just then a step sounded on the stairs. We were all glad to hear it, and looked eagerly to see the doctor enter; but, instead, the tall, dark figure of the gipsy sybil crossed the room, and with a gesture of malediction, stopped beside the dying man. He turned his head, a dark gleam of fury shot into his fading eyes and fired his sallow cheeks, and in a voice of concentrated bitterness he ejaculated the simple word:

"Mother!"

"Ay, Norman, curse me if you will! I did it," answered the woman, slowly; "but it was not intended for you, my boy, my own child, if you are his too. No! it was for his traitor heart, who has wronged me and perjured himself; it was to settle at last for all those long years that he has made me suffer and wander an exile and an outcast, while another held my place; and now he has murdered you!"

Mr. Sunderland stood up with a face pale as death, but set with determination; he faced the gipsy woman as she finished speaking.

"Yuba," he said, in a gentle but firm tone, "this must end. You have haunted me like an avenging spirit long enough! You killed by your wicked emissaries and cruel arts, the gentlest creature that ever lived, and if I did not bring you to punishment it was because it was too late to save her. You have made the life of my eldest son a curse to me and to himself, and brought him to a violent death. You have tried by some evil means to ruin her son, and now your power over me ends. Norman, by his sinful complication with you, has lost his life, but Clarence is spared, though it be to scorn his father. That I have wronged you I admit, but I did it innocently. I believed you dead when I married again. You left my protection voluntarily, and gave the boy to my sole charge by never claiming him. When I discovered that you still lived I would not abandon the gentle being who had linked her fate to mine; knowing the whole story of my lawless youth, she had cared for and loved you child, until your spirit, reproduced in him, scorned and spurned her tenderness. I have been sufficiently punished for that one dark page in my life, and the power of your whole tribe cannot affect me further. I warn you, Yuba, to follow me no longer. The law has power to free me, and to it I shall apply."

The dying man stirred uneasily.

"Hush!" he said, "it is coming now; I am punished, mother!" he cried, fiercely. "It was your fault. You told me what I was, and taught me to hate him; you followed me from place to place, urging me to deeds of violence. You sent Lola with the poisoned draught for her who never harmed you, and your wicked arts would have destroyed Clarence. Beware of the ring. Is—"

Here his voice failed him, and he sank back on Jessie's arm.

He looked at her intently a moment; through his white lips crept the solitary word, "forgive."

A year has passed away, a year of sad, monotonous life to the family at Redfield Hall. The fragile spirit-like being that flits like a shadow through its gloomy portals is my once gay and beautiful sister Maude.

No Catholic could be more sincere or frequent in her devotions than she. The sick and poor have learned to bless her as a patron saint.

She says she has done with the things of this world, but Clarence and I, talking it over, hope to see the shadow yet lifted from her life.

We have sold Redfield, and are going to live a season in London before we settle down in a new home.

Mr. Sunderland goes with us; he is the same as ever, but will be happier in his old age if the constant care of three children—Maude, Clarence, and I—can make him so.

There are great preparations at Redfield for a bridal; it will be a solemn affair, but perhaps more lasting in its happiness.

The bishop came down in his canonical robes to marry us, and the church at Redfield was beautifully dressed in evergreens. Maude and Jessie were my bridesmaids, very sad ones, but I have long lived in a sad atmosphere. The future shall be different.

The bishop was just about to pronounce the words that made us one, and Clarence was fumbling in his pocket for the ring, when like a flash something dropped upon the Holy Book, and my staring eyes were riveted on the turquoise ring. I turned to see who placed it there, and saw a dusky form retreating through the church door. It was not Yuba, for she had died a violent death; but I saw for an instant two gleaming half-shut eyes glancing hatred and defiance at me. It was Lola, and I never saw her again.

I know not if the good man was troubled at the weird thing, but his hand trembled so that it rolled from the book to the floor, where it lay beneath the feet of Clarence. When the ceremony was over and we turned to go, he accidentally set his foot upon it and crushed it to a thousand atoms. Was it some deadly poison, or weird enchantment, or unhappy agency? but a dark spot on the floor remains to this day. We do not often speak of it now in our happy home, for we would banish such gloomy reminiscences, and the spell is for ever broken. Only dark and mysterious memory, like the recall of a troubled dream, remains of the turquoise ring. How it had been rescued from the dark waters I could only guess. Either Yuba or Lola had witnessed my attempt to bury it in its depths.

Redfield Hall is a desolation now. The rook sits in its deserted rooms, and the silence and gloom of decay mark all things.

Upon one corner of its lonely site is a grave overrun with weeds, which climb rank and noisome over the tall white shaft at its head, and here a bony figure often sits.

It is Jessie Sunderland, to whom Redfield Hall belongs, but who will never cross its threshold or claim the gloomy inheritance.

Over our happy home in Wales—our old home purchased—Mrs. Grant presides. Mr. Sunderland is happier now that the dark shadow is lifted from his life, and very penitent. Maude is persistently religious, and now seems old once restored may yet effect a change in her life.

I sometimes wonder if I am too happy in my home and my husband; but I will not darken the present by evil anticipation for the future. The mystery and gloom and unhappiness of a portion of my life passed out of existence with the fatal turquoise ring.

M. L. R.

A WORD ABOUT HYDE PARK.—As soon as it was enclosed, it appears to have been promoted from a manor into a park, with a "keeper," who eventually was dignified with the title of "ranger." The first keeper on record was George Roper, Esq., whose pay was sixpence a day. In 1554 the office was divided, and the salary raised to fourpence a day, with pasture for twelve cows and six oxen. The keepership appears to have been held successively by Carew, Lord Hunsdon; Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; Sir Walter Cope, Sir Henry Rich, and the Earl of Northport, before the Rebellion, when, three years after the

death of Charles I., he sold the three lands retained, Charles ranger, was succeeded by his groounds Elizabeth were ca

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death of Charles I., it was "Resolved that Hyde Park be sold for ready money." The park, as we learn from the printed particulars of the sale, was put up in three lots, the whole 621 acres, which it then contained, realizing £17,068 6s. 8d. At the Restoration, Charles II. gave the keepership, with the title of ranger, to his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, who was succeeded by Colonel James Hamilton, one of the grooms of the bedchamber, after whose widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton, the houses built near Park Lane were called Hamilton Place.

CHARLIE; OR, HOW I GAINED MY WISH.

It was not a wish. It was a passion, a deep, earnest, intense, soul-absorbing passion.

From the moment that the careless hours of a joyous childhood had passed, and my mind had sufficiently developed to receive and grasp ideas, to see the glories and revel in the delights of Continental travel had been my one longing, growing with my growth and strengthening with my strength, till all other earthly pleasures were dwarfed into mere insignificance by its side.

The more I read, the more I studied, the deeper grew my appreciation of beauty, the stronger my powers of thought, the more intense the wish became.

The beauties alike of nature and art—the old associations and clustering memories, the glorious cathedrals, the grand old castles, with their "donjon keep," and feudal knights and armed retainers—all had such powerful, such tremendous attraction for me, that my one idea of happiness, my daily and mighty vision of earthly bliss, without which all others must be incomplete, resolved itself into the power of reaching that coveted land, and pressing with my feet the long-desired soil.

Month followed month, year followed year.

I watched the wished-for joy come to friend after friend, and while travelling with them in spirit, and joying in their joy, still did I weary that my hour would not come.

Girlhood, with its eager, impulsive exaggerations, deepened into early womanhood, and my soul's wish deepened with it, as the mighty power of art, displayed in those marvellous foreign galleries, and the mightier power of nature, as seen in those old snow-crowned mountain tops, or nestling in the hollow dingles and mossy valleys, or sleeping in those calm, tranquil lakes, which seem created but to mirror heaven; as each of these, I say, were glowingly portrayed to me, in moonlight walks and talks, by the deep tones of a loved voice, which would have lent a charm for me to any words, was it wonderful that the one idea did but intensify, as time bore life's bark onward?

How vividly at this moment can I recall that sunny morning, when, standing looking through the bower of honeysuckle which trellised the window of my new home, Edward came laughingly up to me, and reading my glad, admiring gaze, said:

"So you like it, darling? I am so glad to see you satisfied."

"Satisfied!" I echoed. "Who could help being delighted with such a fairy home? It seems almost like enchantment."

"And yet it is not the Continent," said he, a little maliciously. "Do you know that it is a marvel to me that you ever promised to 'honour and obey' without knowing whether I should ever take you there? You know how jealous I used to be of its place in your affections?"

"You need marvel then no longer, for of course I only promised on the understanding that you could not do otherwise, knowing my wish," said I, laughing. "Ella De Lancey did not become Ella Merton to vegetate for the rest of her life in England."

"But I thought," said he, "that when a woman married, she always expected to follow the fortunes of her husband, doesn't she?"

"Certainly, only if you expect me to be happy, those fortunes must lead you to travel, and I will gladly follow them."

"You do not still care so very much to go, dear Ella, do you?" said he, a little anxiously, the first shadow I had ever seen resting on his brow. "I fancied—I hoped that you were, as you said, satisfied; for dearly as I should love to gratify you, I see no chance that I could leave business here, for years, if may be."

"Care still to go!" I repeated. "Well, Edward, I knew men were conceited, but this is a little too much. So you and your presence are to be sufficient to crush out a life-long desire. Don't look so grave; the pleasure only seems to double whenever I think how glad I am that I could never go before; for now you will take me, you will show me all you have told

me of, you will be with me, and it will be perfect."

He bent over me, kissed me, and said, cheerfully: "Well, it will be a pleasure in reserve. And you know I can have no higher earthly joy than to give you pleasure."

Why, as he turned away, did I fancy that he sighed? And why was I conscious of not being quite satisfied with myself? It was in the first days of married life, and I was too happy to ask myself, and the whole conversation was apparently soon forgotten. The bright months rolled on; the summer honeysuckle had dropped its leaves; the autumn harvest had been garnered in; the winter storms had made ice-palaces of the arching trees, and in each different season I had found a special charm, for I was town-bred, and my husband's country home had been a novel and never-ceasing delight to me. With an enthusiastic love of nature, I had had but few opportunities of cultivating the taste, and each hour of the last few months had seemed to reveal some new beauty.

"Edward, can you really believe that spring has come again? Look what treasures I found in the garden this morning; the first violets, aren't they lovely?" said I, as we sat together in a room, to which we had given the proud title of nursery, in honour of our new-found treasure.

"Very lovely; but, Ella, why are you so white? You must really get back that colour I used to be so proud of. Are you strong, do you think?"

"Oh, strong enough! but I am white to match my snowflake here. Edward, I don't like his being so white, do you? It is of much more consequence than my being so." As I spoke, I turned down the cradle-cover, and displayed our sleeping darling, whose baby features seemed chiselled out of Parian marble, so faultlessly pure it was, and winning for him the name by which I always loved to call him, "my snowflake." Why, whenever I looked at him, must I for ever keep repeating—

Pale as baby carved in stone,
Seen by glimpse of the moon,
Up a dark cathedral aisle!

I know not, I tried to forget the words, but still they kept rising to my mind.

"Nonsense!" said Edward. "He's all the lover for it; it's his nature, he's always been so. I suppose babies are always so; but it's not your nature, and I want your roses back."

"Babies always so! Edward, how foolish you are! They're never so, and that's what worries me; he looks too pure for earth. Oh, why did I say that?"

"Ella, darling, you are nervous, you must get up your strength and get over these foolish fancies. Charlie is the picture of health."

As he spoke, the child stirred, opened his large, dark eyes, and rested them on his father's face.

In looking back, I now think, although it passed unobserved at the moment, either that something in their expression troubled him, or that, for the first time, it occurred to him that such marble pallor could scarcely be the hue of health.

"Ella," he said abruptly, "I wish we knew something about babies. Oughtn't he to be so pale?"

And then, as though a sudden thought struck him, he added:

"That's it, you're both pale. I'll try hard to arrange matters this spring, and give you your wish. We will run over to France, travel this summer, and return in the autumn with rosy cheeks for both of you."

I was thunderstruck. I looked at him in mute amazement.

"Why, Edward, you can't be serious! Take that darling on the ocean! Could you dream for a moment that I would think of it? No, not for all the world ever held, would I wish it. My precious one! My blessing! My own little snow-bird!"

And I bent over him and covered him with kisses.

Edward looked at me in silence for a moment, with an expression which it puzzled me to read, and then putting one finger in that little hand, to be clasped by the baby fingers, he said:

"And so, baby, you have cut out poor papa. Time was, when mamma said I was foolish and conceited to imagine that I could make up to her for the Continent; but here comes a little interloper who has never even tried to please her, while it was the study of my life to anticipate every desire, and lo, for you she yields at once her 'life-long desire,' as she called it to me then. Ah, baby, you have made me sadly jealous!"

A sharp pang of reproach shot through me as I thought how utterly this little tender life, given into my keeping, had indeed changed every feeling; but no woman will calmly sit down under an attack, without an effort for victory, therefore my answer came instantly:

"Oh, Edward, what utter nonsense! You know

then it was so different—it could never have hurt you, but it might risk Charlie's life; and then," said I, trying to laugh off his words, "I wonder who would have grieved most? No, you are not really jealous of your son and heir."

He only answered by seizing his boy and tossing him in his arms, to my great horror and the silent wonder of those lovely large eyes which seemed to be looking so far beyond us and earth.

"Well, little one, I am rather proud of both you and your mother, and tolerably well satisfied with you both too. Get roses at home, and I won't propose such going abroad, oh, mamma?"

And laughingly laying our pet on my lap, he ran downstairs.

When time goes smoothly on, with few changes to mark it, how little are we conscious that each period as it passes is leaving its ineffaceable stamp in some way.

How strange it now seems to me that, in the happy months which followed, no shadow of the coming ill rested on my path! no foreboding, no presentiment of evil—not evil, oh, no! let me withdraw that word—of suffering and of sorrow—not of evil.

That was not the first nor the last time that Edward rallied me on Master Charlie's having cut him out, but I knew that he was not in earnest, and the child was a link which bound us tenfold closer. Oh, what bright sunny days those were! Too bright to last—too bright for earth!

Our snowflake never lost his name, but he seemed well, and I almost ceased to fear.

How we hailed his first tooth! how we told each little sigh he made!

Never was child so sweet, so loving, so tender! But we never, even to each other, gave voice to the wonder that he was so grave—yes, let me say it now, so unearthly.

He would lift that little hand and twine it in my curls, and nestle that precious head upon my breast, but no smile came!

I sometimes thought that he seemed to have wandered from a brighter sphere, and felt lost till he regained it.

I hardly know when or how the change first came—long, long enough, I know, before I admitted it to myself.

I first discovered that he slept more easily in my arms than in his cradle, and that he seemed distressed when I laid him on his pillow. Edward often reproved me for holding him so much.

"He is growing too heavy!" he would say; "you keep yourself weak by doing it. It is wrong, very wrong."

I tried to tell him, but the words would not come, that he seemed strangely light, and that I thought he suffered from lying flat.

I knew that I was nervous, over anxious, and, moreover, I dreaded to confirm the sinking fear at my heart by giving it words.

Our treasure had never been sick, had needed no medical care, no watching; and yet I could not conceal from myself that my idol was somehow floating out of my grasp—my snowflake was melting in earth's sun and dust. The truth came all too soon.

One evening Edward told me that a business engagement would detain him in the city till very late at night, and charged me not to sit up for him.

I promised, and most fully meant to obey, but on going to the nursery at tea-time, I found the nurse had taken Charlie from his cradle and was holding him in her arms.

"I just took him up, ma'am; I notice now he always seems to rest so much easier than when he lies flat."

Oh what a sudden pain smote my heart at those words. She, too, had noticed them what I fancied only known to myself.

"Does he seem to suffer at all?" I asked, quickly.

"Oh no, ma'am, only restless; and see he is quite easy now."

I took him gently from her, and telling her I would take charge of him for the rest of the night, carried him to my own room, and seated myself with my precious burden in my arms, and oh, what a fat heavier one in my heart.

I bent over him, raining kisses on brow, and cheek, and lips.

Calmly he slept, and as I watched I felt half inclined to chide myself for my unreasonable fears; and, as it were, to test their reality, I softly laid him on my bed and closely watched the effect.

At once the little chest began to heave, the breathing became laboured, and he dashed his arms restlessly.

I raised him, his head settled itself upon my breast, and he seemed calm and comforted.

Once more, as though impelled by some strong force I could not combat, did I try the same experiment with the same result—and then I faced the truth. It must be, it was—what I had refused to believe, what

I had reasoned myself out of, what I had so often turned from and shrank from so persistently—his heart; something was wrong there, and I must watch him suffer—I must watch him die.

I cannot go on. Though years, long years have passed, my pen cannot record the speechless agony of those long hours of watching as they slowly dragged along.

I only know that then, then for the first time, often as I had thought that I had prayed before, I poured out my soul in one deep, earnest cry to heaven; for what—for patience, trust, truth, submission, resignation?

No, for none of these, but for my angel's life, that such a blow might be withheld—that such a horror might be spared, and he, my pride, my joy, my blessing, be given to my care and watching.

No, he could not, should not go; such love as mine must hold him from the grave itself.

Alas! alas! such prayers cannot be heard; or rather, they are heard, and win their answer, too, but not the answer that our breaking hearts demand.

I was aroused at last by a well-known step, treading cautiously to avoid disturbing me.

My promises had been utterly forgotten, and there had I been watching for I know not how many hours. The door opened and Edward entered. He started on seeing me, looked much displeased, and said, sternly:

"Up at this hour, Ella! After all I have said, too, with that child in your arms. It seems that my wishes have little weight with you; I think, for your sake, I had better make them commands."

He seemed hurt and seriously offended, but as he came up to me my face must have told its own tale, for changing his tone instantly, he said:

"Ella, my darling, my own wife, what is the matter? Don't look so; speak to me. Is he ill? What is it?"

"Edward, he is going from us; our idol is going to leave us. I have known it for a long time, but I could never tell you till now."

My tearless calm seemed to frighten him more than any excitement; he evidently thought that my mind was disturbed, and before I knew his intention, took Charlie from me and laid him on the bed. I gave a low cry, and said quickly:

"Look! oh look!"

This time he gave a short convulsive gasp, almost a spasm, and a dark grey line settled over his face.

Edward raised him instantly, and giving him to me, said:

"Hold him, and I will have the doctor here in five minutes."

The next moment he was downstairs, and I heard the hall door dashed to behind him.

I carried Charlie to the window, raised it, and let the damp night air blow in his face; it seemed to revive him, and he opened his eyes and looked at me with such a sad, pleading expression.

That look stabbed me through and through, and is with me now in those long night watches known only to heaven and our own hearts.

I can speak calmly now of that terrible night; but none can ever know what a wicked, rebellious heart I then had. I tremble to think of it, even at this distance of time.

I was reckless—mad; I cared for nothing but that precious treasure before me; it seemed that I was wronged. I felt at war with all the world, and even the sound of my husband's step with the doctor only jarred on my overwrought nerves, for I had no hope that he could bring any relief. Despair had taken hold of me, and even prayer seemed denied me. Heaven grant that few on earth may ever pass through the struggle of those days of darkness!

The door opens—I feel, more than see, them enter. The doctor approaches, turns the strong light on the child's face, and after a close examination says:

"Mr. Merton, how long has this been known to you?"

"Never till this night," said Edward.

"From his birth," I said, instantly; but my voice sounded so hard and unnatural that it almost frightened me.

I was conscious that Edward's eyes were fixed on me in wonder, and that the doctor's keen glance was reading me through, but I cared not; I was desperate.

"Yes," said the doctor, quietly. "I knew it at his birth, but hoped that you did not."

He knew it at his birth!

Then no hope. My hasty words had only given me another stab.

"Oh, no!" I said. "I only meant I have been anxious from his birth, from that great pallor, and from observing that he was never easy in lying down, but seemed to find comfort in my arms, when his head was higher. Is it, tell me, is it his heart?"

"One of the valves of the heart has never acted properly, but I had no idea that the difficulty would increase so rapidly."

"Could anything have been done earlier?" I asked, in the same stony voice.

"Nothing."

"Now?" I added.

He turned away, and said something to Edward in a low tone, who followed him out of the room.

I strained my ears to catch what they were saying, and as they went down the stairs I heard the doctor say:

"Do not wish it! It can be only prolonged suffering!"

I sat still, cold, and numb. I moved not—stirred not; it seemed that my pulses even did not beat. Edward came in, but I did not lift my head. Dear Edward! how selfish I was; I see it all now. The blow to him had been so terribly sudden, while my long-concealed and unspoken dread had, in one way, broken for me the violence of it; but I thought not then of that, I only felt that a mother's grief, a mother's sorrow must be tenfold greater, and scarcely felt that he could share my woes. He took the chair at my side, and putting his arm gently and tenderly round me, said:

"My own precious wife, a loving Father will give us strength to bear this crushing blow; let us pray for it together."

"I will pray for my baby's life," I said. "My lips shall form no other prayer."

The sad, surprised, pained look with which he heard my answer, so touching in its mournfulness, as though assured by my words that I was putting help and comfort from me, still lingers in my memory.

And here I must pause a moment, to say that his faith and trust had always been stronger and deeper than mine.

It was his strong, clear perception of right, his singleness of aim and purpose, which had first attracted me; and often during our married life had the conviction forced itself upon me, that he was acting from a higher standard than I was, and carried his principles more into his daily life than I had ever done.

I revered goodness, and believed that I was trying to practise it, but this night proved most plainly how an earthly love had absorbed my whole being, and how utterly and terribly rebellious I was.

I remember being conscious, even then, that I could not bear my husband to know the full extent of my idolatry, nor the wild, passionate love with which I declared to myself that my baby could not, should not die. Ah! well is it for us all, that only the eye of the All-Merciful, the All-Pitiful can see the dark depths of our suffering, sinning souls.

Then keep the softening veil in mercy drawn, Thou, who canst love us, though Thou read us true.

Edward sat perfectly silent after that one look, and nothing but Charlie's low and now regular breathing broke the profound stillness.

I know not how long we sat thus, but at last he rose, and said, with a quiet air of authority, which I dared not disregard:

"Give Charlie to me now, Ella; the day is breaking, and you have had no rest. You must guard your strength for his sake. Lie down, and try to sleep for a few hours, and I will call you if he stirrs."

I obeyed mechanically, and as though in a dream. I threw myself at once on the bed, and watched them both for some time; but finally nature asserted itself, and it seemed that I was just sinking into forgetfulness, when a gasp and a low cry roused me.

Another such spasm as that of the night before, but this time with no provoking cause, yielding, however, as before, to fresh air and water dashed in his face. But I dare not linger over these days. I can only say, that I humbly trust that my angel-boy did the work that he was sent to do; for during that unbroken watch of two weeks, I learned to frame another prayer for his precious life; that he might be taken from his suffering, and that we might bow to the Hand which had sent the blow.

It was a hard, hard struggle, but the lesson came from those sweet, patient eyes, which, when the suffering came, were turned on me, and said so plainly and so pleadingly:

"Help me! oh, help me!" and I—I, who would have gladly given all that earth held—breath, life itself—to win for him but just one moment's ease, was helpless—powerless to aid; and yet loving him wildly, passionately, as I did, I was praying to keep him, to hold him here. I, who could not help him; I, who let him suffer, but would not let him die.

Was this love, or was it selfishness, bitter, bitter selfishness? Thus came to me the mighty need of some One above and beyond myself; some One stronger, and deeper, and All-Powerful to guard, to tend, to ease my child. And in those long night-watches, when the soft rays of the moonlight made a halo round that blessed brow, I poured out my repentant soul in an agony of shame and sorrow.

Edward and I at first took turns in watching, but to me sleep would not come, and therefore, when I saw that with every will to watch, weariness and sleep

would creep over him (for men can lose their troubles in forgetfulness, while woman's heart will hold her waking, from intensity of love and sorrow), I took my boy, and claimed the nights; and so it came that they were left to me, when I assured him, and with perfect truth, that I was better, happier, more at rest than when away.

The old, fierce feeling died away. How could it live in such a presence? But once did it recur. On one of the mornings following a sad, struggling night, when my whole nature seemed in strong revolt, and the whole battle to be fought afresh, Edward and the doctor entered the room.

They stood and watched us both. I heard their words, but I had no power to answer or comprehend, till suddenly I caught the sense of what the doctor dropped his voice to say:

"You must put a stop to this; it is killing Mrs. Merton; the re-action will be too great. Shouldn't you take the child from her?"

Ah, that was plain, too plain! I could understand that only too well. And as Edward came up to me I grasped Charlie tighter, and said, fiercely:

"Heaven alone shall take my child from me, soon enough! I will never give him up till then."

What a woe-begone face Edward had! and how little I realized how I was adding to his suffering, but the overstrain on my nerves seemed to have bewildered my brain.

I was not myself, and I think a loving Father pitied and pardoned that great sin. Edward hesitated, and I heard again, in a low tone, "Give it up; don't distress her further; it is in vain in her present state" adding something further which I failed to catch.

They left the room, and as soon as I was alone repentance came. How wrong—how hard and cold I was! Was not my Charlie Edward's Charlie too? and what right had I to keep him to myself, and above all to answer my husband thus, when his one thought was for me, his one earnest longing to help me to bear this terrible grief, and I would not be helped?

Earnestly and long did I pray for forgiveness, and after a sharp struggle I schooled my poor torn heart into a determination to tell Edward how wrong I had been, and that he should keep Charlie to-night, if I might only come and look at him from time to time.

When he re-entered the room I was struck for the first time by his pale, haggard face, and my heart smote me to think how utterly Charlie had engrossed me, and how little I had tried to comfort him.

"Dear Edward!" I said, "will you forgive me? I was so wrong just now, but indeed, I scarcely know what I am saying. You shall keep Charlie to-night, only please let me come and look at him now and then, won't you?"

My penitence seemed to unman him more than my fierceness; he tried to speak, could not command himself, and walked quickly to the window. In a few moments, however, he came back, and gently passing his hand over my tangled curls, said:

"No, Ella, darling, you must keep him to-night, but I will sit by you and watch too."

I protested against this; he was no worse, I was quite needless, but Edward was firm, and a nameless dread of asking or knowing more made me yield the point.

Our precious one had scarcely been out of our arms since that terrible night; the nurse of course aided us, but we could not bear that he should be left to her even for a short time, unless when it was an absolute necessity.

He only suffered at times, when the attacks of oppression would come on, and then the distress for breath was very great; but he faded—oh, so rapidly! and the little hands grew thinner and more transparent, and the blue veins looked bluer as they descended beneath their pearly covering, and the sad, soft eyes, so mournful in their weary weakness, seemed so touching in their mute, plaintive appeal that I could not wish to keep him to suffer.

The sharp cut lines of that night stand out clear and distinct, as though it were but yesterday. I see it all once more.

As the golden sun sank behind the western hills, the whole heavens were lighted with a flood of glory; and as I laid Charlie on his father's knee, that rich radiance rested for a moment on his marble cheek, and tinged it with the hue of health.

The daylight died; the stars took up their watch. I seated myself on a low stool at Edward's side, and leaning against him I watched my boy. The hours wore slowly on. Charlie seemed calmer, and slept more easily than he was wont to do; and I marvelled that Edward should have been more anxious. Suddenly it seemed a brightness rested on my darling's face, and looking up, I saw through my front window the first rays of the rosy light of dawn—the blessed sun come back to help and cheer us on. I rose at once.

"Now, Edward, let me have my two." He laid him softly in my arms, and as I pressed my

lips upon that blessed brow, a smile, a heavenly smile
breaks o'er that angel face—a start, a thrill, and we
are left alone!

Three months after that dreadful hour I was lying
one morning on a couch in my parlour, where Edward
had carried me for the first time since my illness.

I cannot describe what followed that time. They
told me that the over-taxing of my system had pro-
duced a violent brain-fever, and that for many weeks
they had despaired of my life, but to me it is all a
blank.

I recall nothing after that morning's dawn, and
such a shuddering horror comes with the effort to do
so, that I no longer attempt it.

I am satisfied to know that, under God, I owe my
life to my husband's tender, faithful nursing and care.
Oh, what a strength and comfort he was to me in
those earlier days of my recovery!

It seemed that I had never truly known him till
then. Sorrow proved a far deeper, closer bond than
joy, and he led me to feel that our sweet link with
heaven now must ever draw me onward and upward.
But to return to that morning. I had been conscious
for some time that I was not improving as I ought
to do. Day followed day, and week followed week,
and in spite of every effort I continued helpless and
wretched, depressed, and despondent.

Spring had glided into early summer, and through
the glass door of the parlour the voices of Edward and
the doctor came to me from the garden outside, where
they were seated.

"Doctor, I am not satisfied about Ella; is it natural
that she should continue so feeble?"

"Mrs. Merton does not gain as I could wish; the
shock to her nervous system has been very great, and
I now dread her sinking into a confirmed state of
weakness and despondency. She needs rousing, and
my chief object in coming over here this morning was
to ask you whether it would not be possible for you
to take her abroad for a year. Nothing would do her
as much good; in fact, I think it would re-establish
her health entirely."

What was it that went through my heart? Was it
a knife that stabbed me? I uttered a cry, and
Edward was by my side in a moment.

"What is it, Ella? Are you ill? How could I
leave you alone?"

I tried to smile, I tried to speak, but everything
turned black before me, and I fainted.

"Coming downstairs was too much for her," was
the first thing I remember hearing in the doctor's
voice, as I came to myself; "keep her very quiet, and
let her rest now."

When he went, Edward carried me gently upstairs,
and placing me on the bed fulfilled the doctor's
orders by begging me to rest, and leaving me to do so.
Rest! could he have looked into my heart in the long,
outwardly quiet hours that followed he would have
seen little rest there—little rest in its stormy, tumultuous
beatings—little rest in the remorse with which I
remembered that a happy home and devoted husband
could not satisfy me, unless I could have the fulfil-
ment of my one desire; and now, now, when all earth
held no spot so precious to me as that one little
green mound, I was to be taken from it, forced to
leave it.

No, I would never go! No power should induce
me to leave that spot.

Then came the thought of my duty to my husband,
of his long and earnest devotion to me, and my utter
inability to fulfil a wife's duties to him in my present
state. Did I owe him nothing?

And more, might this not be sent as a punishment
for my former self-will, and as such (wishing and
striving to do right, as I humbly trusted I was at present)
ought I not to accept it?

The struggle was long and bitter, and when Edward
came up and kissed my burning brow, I felt thankful
that he sat by me in silence, and made no allusion to
the plan.

I wanted time, I wanted solitude, I wanted prayer to
decide it, and in the long hours of that night I found them all, and resolved, with aching heart and weary
weeping, that if it was Edward's wish, I would consent,
and that he should never know at what fearful
cost I agreed to it.

A few days went by; the dreaded hour came, and
as we sat in the soft summer twilight, Edward said to
me:

"I have been trying to arrange matters so as to
gratify an old wish of yours; can you guess what it
is?"

"I could not affect to misunderstand, and yet, with
a sort of desperate hope that even then there might be
some means of escape, I said, pleadingly:

"Edward, dear Edward, it is so far!"

"So far?" he echoed.

"So far—from him."

"But, dearest, for my sake."

And then he urged it strongly, told me all I too
well knew—of my own weakness and my need of

change, and of the doctor's words, and of his own de-
sire; and I was very still, and when he had quite done,
I said:

"Edward, I will go."

One only saw my heart when my lips said those
words.

My wish was gained. All that I had dreamed of
in nature and art were spread before me.

I climbed the rugged mountain side, descended into
sweet, smiling valleys; threaded the passes of the
wild Swiss Alps; gazed on the mighty mysteries of
German art, and gladdened my eyes with Fra Angelico's golden glories, the pure, the matchless "Il
Bello."

Time was, when it would have been all one glad
feast of happiness and joy; but now the dark thread
of sorrow wove into my life mingled with everything,
casting a shadow on every sight, giving an echo of
sadness to every sound.

Did Edward call me, as we stood in Dresden, by
the world-famed "Madonna di San Sisto," to share
his exquisite delight, in gazing on those heads of
cherubim of soft, seraphic sweetness, I only saw my
boy, my precious one, my pure, my perfect child.

Health slowly and gradually returned, and for Ed-
ward's sake I tried to rejoice; his delight at my im-
provement was so great.

One day he turned to me and said:

"How right it was to come, dear Ella. You are
beginning to look something like your old self once
more. Do you feel strong again?"

"Oh, yes! quite strong. Now will you take me
back?"

"What! tired already, Ella, my precious wife?
Yes, you shall go, indeed."

He folded me within his arms, and on that faithful,
manly breast, I poured out all my grief, till now re-
pressed.

I told him how I heard the plan at first, what bitter
self-reproach was mine, and how I fainted then.

I told him of the struggle and the consciousness
that the final fulfilment of my great self-will came as
a punishment, and that as such I had received it, and
now—oh, might I not go back?

Gently and tenderly he soothed me. "Your lesson
has been hard, my darling one," he said; "but let us
both begin afresh. We idolized our boy too much; let
us, in what is left of life, guard carefully our treacherous
desires, and strive to say in each event, 'Thy will,
not mine, be done!'"

A. N. H.

LONGEVITY.

THE census of 1861 gives a list of only 201 centenarians, who were born before the conquest of Canada
and before George III. was king. It is observable
that more women attain to old age than men, but the
greater strength of the latter is necessary to attain to
the extreme limits of human life. Haller, who has
collected the greatest number of instances of longevity,
thus tabularises them:—

Of men who lived from 100 to 110,						
there have been	1,000					
110 to 120	60					
120 to 130	29					
130 to 140	15					
140 to 150	6					
169	1					

Hufeland, generalising from these facts, thinks that
the organization and vital powers of man are able to
support a duration and activity of 200 years! This
is, of course, only an individual opinion, which must be
taken for what it is worth, but there can be no
manner of doubt that, as civilization advances, the
whole mass of human life is being lifted and lengthened.
The causes of disease are slowly being eliminated.
As compared with a hundred years ago, the present
duration of life is as four to three. This being the
case, there is every reason to suppose that exceptional
lives will tower above the general level of longevity
as they did of old. Sometimes, when any old lives
are linked together, they are enabled to transmit the
memory of events over intervals of time which are
perfectly startling. One person conversing with
another has been known to carry us back into the
actual presence of circumstances the printed records
of which have mainly perished, or at least live in
black-letter or worm-eaten paper, only to be found in
the library of the antiquary.

It seems strange to be told that, as late as the year
1780, there was a Spitalfields weaver alive who had
witnessed the execution of Charles I., and of a Cum-
berland woman alive in 1766 who remembered the
siege of Carlisle by Cromwell. If this woman had
ever conversed with Dr. Routh, President of Mag-
dalen College, Oxford, who was ten years old at the
time of her death, we should have had an old gentle-
man alive only ten years ago who had been in direct
conversation with one of the witnesses of a siege in
the Great Rebellion. But perhaps the most extra-

ordinary length of time bridged over by two lives is
that mentioned by Mr. Sidney Gibson, F.S.A., who
relates that he knew a gentleman who had often
heard his father say he had conversed with one
Peter Gordon, who died in the year 1786 at the age
of 127, who, when a boy, had heard Henry Jenkens
give evidence in a court of justice of his having
carried arrows to Flodden Field. The imagination
almost refuses to believe that the span of life in two
persons should have touched the beginning of the
sixteenth and the end of the eighteenth centuries—
that these two individuals should have ranged over
events in our history beginning with a border warfare
in the days of bows and arrows, and ending at a
time when India had been virtually conquered nine
years at the battle of Pondicherry.

When one is asked what are the causes of longevity
it may be pretty safely answered that a good digestion
is at the bottom of the whole business. The perfect
action of the organ by which the frame is nourished
must clearly be of the first moment. Whether the
assertion of the cynic that, in addition to a good diges-
tion, a bad heart is also necessary, may, perhaps, be
open to doubt. That insensibility to the sufferings of
others relieves us of much mental anguish—a great
cause of decay—there can be little doubt; but, on the
other hand, the pleasurable emotions that spring from
a pure heart are of infinite potency in prolonging life.
It is the little worrying cares that nag at the springs
of existence. Great natural philosophers, great painters,
and great poets have lived long. Galileo, Kepler, and
Newton survived to a good old age. So did Herschel
and his sister Lucretia, although she spent many years
of nights in the observatory assisting her brother in his
labours. It may be that the calm contemplation of
other worlds so lifts the mind above the petty cares of
this that the body has little cause to grow old.

Swift, Corneille, Young, Goethe, Anacreon, Sophocles,
and Wordsworth all lived beyond the threescore
and ten years; and the longevity of some of the
greatest painters has been remarkable. Titian and
Michael Angelo both lived to the age of ninety-six. It
is also a daily matter of remark that great lawyers
attain to a long age. Within our own memory three
law lords—Eldon, Stowell, and Lyndhurst—passed
their ninetieth year.

We apprehend, however, that much of this connection
to great age with great offices is patent enough
to life actuaries. Lawyers, for instance, are not ap-
pointed to the great offices of state until they have
passed all the more dangerous epochs of human life,
and when the chances of existence are materially en-
hanced. At the same time, it must be conceded that
great fame of an enduring character must be dependent
upon prolonged vitality. A man's reputation, if it is
sustained with full vigour in popular estimation, in-
creases with his increasing years. The spectacle of
Lord Eldon working by his solitary lamp up to the
latest day of his life impressed the public mind with
his prodigious powers; and we can understand the
almost superstitious veneration with which Michael
Angelo and Titian were contemplated by their contem-
poraries, who beheld them dying almost with their
brushes in their hands.

CAST OF PRITCHARD'S HEAD.—The cast taken of
the head of the murderer for the Phrenological
Museum of Edinburgh gives a very different impres-
sion of the cerebral development from what one gets
from the portraits, or even from having seen the man
himself. His baldness concealed the deficiency in the
intellectual part of the brain, by making the forehead
appear larger than it in reality was. The fact was
found to be that the animal part of the brain was
fully four-fifths of the whole; or, as an eminent
phrenologist expressed it, the skull was bestial. The
same gentleman remarked that he had only known
one head of a sane person to equal it in its unfavourable
development. The organ of amativeness was
immensely large, and also that of love of approbation.
A request was made to have the brain for scientific
purposes, it being an opinion on the part of some that
the quality as well as the size and form of the brain
has something to do with natural disposition. This
request was declined, on the ground that it is opposed to
the modern Act, which forbids the dissection of the
bodies of malefactors.

DISEASED CORN.—In several corn-growing dis-
tricts of Yorkshire and on the Wolds, the Howardian
Hills especially, the growing crops of corn, principally
of wheat, have been attacked suddenly by disease.
Some farmers term it "blight," others "rust,"
"canker," and "mildew;" but whatever it is, it is
quite unusual for any such attack to take place in a
dry season like the present. In wet years something
like it has been known, but not to the extent now ap-
parent. In many places, fields which presented a
healthy green look a few days ago are now of a dirty
looking brown; in fact, the straw has died and not
ripened. This disease is not confined to wheat, but the

eat and barley crops are likewise showing traces of it. In fields the most attacked, the appearance of the crop at a distance is that of an immense sheet of brown paper. There is none of that fine golden tinge so characteristic of well ripened corn. The harvest has not yet commenced, but in a railway journey an odd field here and there is seen cut. This premature respiration is necessary by the disease just named, which renders the straw comparatively valueless and the corn very small. In a field two miles north of Ma'aten, it is believed there is not a straw that is free from the disease. The stems are all purple, and the foliage is a deadish brown. In a belief that the blight will spread, many people are about to cut their unripe corn. The damaging effects on produce must be very considerable.

SALMON FISHING IN NORWAY.—The accounts of the rod-fishing for Salmon in Norway are this season exceedingly favourable so far as yet received. The following is a return of the slaughter by the rod of Mr. James Cowan, on the six days named, on his river on the Fossefjord Vessen:—On the 8th July, 14 fish, weight 262lb.; on the 10th, 14 fish, weight 279lb.; on the 11th, 18 fish, weight 230lb.; on the 12th, 11 fish, weight 167lb.; on the 13th, 10 fish, weight 163lb.; on the 14th, 12 fish, weight 196lb.; total, 74 fish, weighing 1,297lb., besides some grilse.

SCIENCE.

AMONG the most recent scientific discoveries in France may be mentioned a method invented by M. Néant for keeping afloat a vessel about to sink, and putting out any fire that may happen to break out on board. His plan is to attach a certain number of balloons made of india-rubber, and inflated with air, to the sides of the sinking vessel. M. Chattenmann proposes to render vessels externally incombustible by whitewashing the wood with chloride of lime. This, he thinks, would prevent the rapid propagation of the flames, and allow sufficient time for extinguishing them.

PASTES OR IMITATION STONES of the best class are now almost always made in one way. The basis of all is "strass," a substance so called from the chemist who invented it, which was formerly made from litharge, white sand, and potash, in nearly equal proportions; but, to these, Parisian makers now add a certain proportion of borax, and the paste comes out with the brilliancy of the pure diamond, and a hardness which defies the file—the jeweller's great test. For sapphire, oxide of cobalt is mixed with the strass; and for emerald, the green oxide of copper and oxide of chrome; for the beryl, antimony and the oxide of cobalt; and for garnet, antimony, purple of cassius and oxide of manganese. The Romans often add a kind of cap made of a slice of the true jewel, the composition thus resisting all external tests, and a back made of faceted crystal to impart extra brilliancy, the glue being Venice turpentine, which is perfectly transparent. It is probable that in these imitations lies the chance of the next great advance in the manufacture of glass, as there seems no final reason why "strass" should not be produced on a great scale, so as to give us, for example, tables of engraved beryl, not, it is true, real, but as hard as crystal, and durable almost for ever. The Roman pastes, for instance, have lasted down to our own time, scarcely more injured by age than the true gem would have been.

NON-EXPLOSIVE GUNPOWDER.—Some most successful experiments have been made by Mr. Gale within the last few days, in the presence of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge, &c., showing how gunpowder may be made non-explosive by admixture with glass ground as fine as possible. Equal proportions of the ground glass and gunpowder, when placed together in a bowl, went off like a squib; and nearly the same result followed when the quantity of the separating powder was doubled. As soon, however, as the proportion had been increased from two to one to three to one, there was a visible slackening in the amount of combustion, explosion no longer taking place; and four to one is stated to be the proportion by weight at which the mixture may with impunity be subjected to the action of fuses and red-hot pokers. A good-sized bundle of this diluted gunpowder was placed upon the fire; and, though the paper in which it was wrapped soon burned away, none of the results followed which might have been expected. Instead of a loud roar and a destructive burst of flame from the parcel, the fire itself seemed in danger of being extinguished by the dead weight of powder pressing it down; and it was only here and there that small puffs of dust flew out between the bricks, when isolated grains of the powder went off, disgusted, as it were, with the apathy prevailing around them. This experiment was repeated more than once, and each time with success. Finally, a

keg containing some pounds of the mixture, which Mr. Gale had previously stirred about with a red-hot poker without producing any other results than great smoke and occasional jets of flame, choked almost as soon as they showed themselves, was placed upon the fire. But even here the united efforts of the gunpowder and stove proved unable to set fire to the staves of the barrel, so potent is this powdered glass as a fire annihilator. The practical value of this discovery is obvious; at present gunpowder can only be transported from place to place at exceptional rates and under the most stringent regulations. Render it inexplosive, and therefore innocuous, and it will take its place at once with ordinary merchandise. What gives a greater degree of interest to the invention is, that Mr. Gale, to whom the world is indebted for it, is suffering under the sad privation of loss of sight.

THE EYE AND THE OPHTHALMOSCOPE.

Two persons are asking for advice as to the management of their eyes for short-sightedness. Are both to receive the same advice? The ophthalmoscope alone can furnish positive data. With this we may discover a staphylomatous condition of the back of the eye, a bright eccentric margin around the optic disc and edged with black pigment. Examining it closely, we may find that this pigmented edge gives evidence of progressive inflammation at the back of the eye, and extending to continuous and increasing atrophy and retrocession of the coats of the eye. This person is in danger of becoming rapidly made short-sighted or of losing sight altogether. We must prohibit the use of concave glasses for a certain length of time, and must adopt active and effectual measures for subduing the atrophic inflammation.

In the other patient the ophthalmoscope may show us but little stretching or waste, and that not progressive, and will enable us then to calm his fears, to prescribe appropriate glasses, and to dismiss him to his occupation with ease of mind and safety. So with sudden loss of sight from intra-ocular hemorrhage, the ophthalmoscope gives us information which could never have been guessed at without it, and guides us, not only to the local knowledge, but to the constitutional information essential for cure. There are certain conditions of the eye which may warn anyone that it is desirable that the condition of the vision ought to be investigated by the ophthalmoscope.

Rapidly increasing short-sightedness is one of the most marked, and when this becomes associated with weakness of sight and loss of acuteness in the perception of small objects, the warning is very urgent.

A diminution in the field of vision is another important indication of internal changes in the eye, of which only the ophthalmoscope can detect the true nature. It would be difficult perhaps to say whether more mischief is done and more suffering is caused by the total neglect of such symptoms, or by their ignorant palliation by the aid of common spectacles, chosen empirically, because they facilitate vision for the time.

The great use of the ophthalmoscope, then, is this: that it arms us with an instrument of precision, by which we can determine the precise local condition of the parts of the eye in which the function of sight is resident and through which it is regulated. If it cannot do all that we might ask, it is because the sense of sight is in truth a cerebral function, of which the eye is only an instrument; and in dealing with cerebral affections of the sight, it can indeed give us information which without it we should lack, but it leaves still to be desired more intimate acquaintance with first causes, which at present we can only discuss inferentially.

To the amateur in science and to the lover of nature it discloses an exquisite spectacle, unknown till now, that carries observation into the inner chambers of the living eye, and displays its wonders and its beauties. The observation is perfectly painless, and may easily be effected; rabbits, for example, submit to it with great calmness and composure, and at the College of Physicians' soiree this year, a little pet white rabbit of mine sat up calmly in a box which I had made for the purpose, and was examined, by the aid of a modification which I devised of Liebreich's demonstrating ophthalmoscope, by many score of observers.

A MOUNTAIN OF SILVER.—Silver Peak is believed to be as pre-eminent over all silver mountains as the iron mountain of Missouri is superior to all other iron deposits. Silver Peak is situated east of San Francisco, on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada, and nearly one degree south of the city of Austin. It is some two miles from Castle Mount, an old extinct crater about 5,000ft. above ocean level. Near Silver Peak is an extensive deposit of salt, and not far distant a hill of pure sulphur. The whole country has a naked appearance, being quite destitute of vegetation, and bristles with mountains scattered over a plain of great extent. The dreaded "Valley of Death," upon the plains of which, along the "old Spanish trail,"

travellers have suffered so much, lies but a short distance to the south-east of the crater of Silver Peak. Little Salt Lake, in Southern Utah, lies directly east of Silver Peak. At first the searchers after deposits of the precious metals confined their searches to the Pacific side of the Sierra Nevada, but discoveries in New Mexico, Arizona, and Virginia city, induced a thorough examination of the east side of the Sierra Nevada. This resulted in great success, the most brilliant of which is found in the neighbourhood of Austin, on the line of the great Overland mail, where a city has sprung up within three years which Senator Nye says contains a population of 10,000. From along this line of exploration the miners are rapidly extending their operations, both north and south. Recently (within six months) they came upon this immense deposit near Castle Mount, twelve exceedingly rich lodes, or "ledges," as the miners call them, were discovered on that single mountain. This discovery in an unexpected region is believed to be the most valuable yet developed.

INK.—It is well known that common ink is a precipitate of galate of iron mixed up and kept in suspension with gum and water. As the water evaporates the ink thickens, and moreover becomes mouldy, owing to a small proportion of organic matter proceeding from the gallnut. M. Mathieu Pleney is said to have got rid of these inconveniences, by making a new kind of ink, with pyrogallic acid and the colouring matter derived from Brazil wood and other sorts of wood used in dyeing. The ink, it is alleged, flows well, and never turns yellow on paper.

TO ETCH ON GLASS.—Etching with hydrofluoric acid on plate glass is practised now to a very considerable extent, the French manufacturers especially producing splendid ornamental effects by the process. The drawings to be imitated or etched on the glass are first made on stone or plate and then printed on unsized paper with an ink consisting principally of a solution of asphaltum in oil of turpentine made with the aid of heat, to which some substance is added which shows a more or less crystalline structure on cooling, as stearic acid, spermaceti, naphthaline, paraffin. This mixture is strained and rapidly cooled with constant stirring; it is the only kind of coating which thoroughly resists the action of the corrosive acid. The printed paper is laid flat with the black side on water, to which from 10 to 25 per cent of muriatic acid has been added, and as soon as the lines show signs of softening, the negative printing is transferred to the glass by a slight pressure, and when the paper is then removed the picture will adhere to the glass, and this is afterwards exposed to the fuming vapours in leaden troughs. This acid is very dangerous to handle and should be used with great care. The fumes of it must not be inhaled, and it makes a sore on the flesh where it touches.

ITALY now possesses a fleet of 98 vessels, 74 of which are ships of the line, and 24 are transports. The ships of war consist of 18 ironclads, 21 screw steamers, 25 paddle-wheel steamers, and 10 sailing vessels. The nominal power of the engines in the war steamers is 23,140 horses; they reckon 1,200 cannon and 20,383 men. In the transport service the engines are of 4,350 horse-power, and the ships are provided with 43 cannon, and manned by 1,882 men.

A PIECE of silver plate, remarkable for its workmanship and great antiquity, has been discovered by some masons employed in taking down an old house at Toulon supposed to have been built by the Romans. The massive silver article, representing an ewer for holding water, is ornamented with the figure of the Holy Ghost, with extended wings, and is supposed to have belonged to the early Christians. It was saved from the melting-pot by a watchmaker at Toulon.

THE HOUNDS OF KING HENRY III.—The *Oxford Journal* publishes the following order on the men of Banbury to maintain the huntsmen and hounds of King Henry the Third:—"6th Henry III., 1221-2. The King to the Sheriff of Oxfordshire greeting. We command you to pay unto Richard de Brademar and Richard Pinchun, our huntsmen, three marks, to wit twenty shillings to each of them, for the maintenance of themselves and of our dogs at Banbury by our order, and it shall be accounted to you at the Exchequer. Witness, &c., at Westminster the fifth day of February, in the 6th year of our reign."

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S YACHT.—The Dagmar cutter, recently completed for His Royal Highness by Messrs Harvey, of Wyvernhoes, near Colchester, is 30 tons burthen. The dimensions of the Dagmar are: Length on decks, 50ft. 6in.; main breadth, 13ft. 6in.; depth, 8ft. 4in.; draught of water, 8ft. 6in. The saloon is fitted with Spanish mahogany, walnut-tree, and bird's-eye maple. The ladies' cabin is supererably fitted with mirrors couches, and spring cushions covered with crimson silk, &c. From the saloon forward, on the star-

board side, is a commodious cabin for the captain, and on the opposite side is the pantry, with the cooking apparatus supplied by Messrs. Paskell and Atkey, of Cowes. The sails are by Lapthorn, of Gosport. The yacht, which will cost about £1500, has been built in ten weeks. She left Wyvernhoor on Saturday, July 29, for Osborne, Isle of Wight, in charge of Captain Potter, of East Donyland, Essex, with a crew from Wyvernhoor and East Donyland.

WELLS IN ALGIERS.

For the last four years the French Government has been actively occupied in the establishment of artesian wells in Algiers, principally in that part of the territory of the three provinces which borders on the desert, and where no water-courses exist.

In the province of Algiers, the borings, up to the end of 1864, have yielded three supplies of water, furnishing about 3,742,000 gallons to 3,962,000 gallons of spring water of great purity, in twenty-four hours, and it may be presumed that the works in progress since last year have doubled the amount.

In the province of Oran three wells have been sunk; that of the grand lake, near Oran, has already arrived at a depth of 389 yards; the second, at Mon-el-gue-touta, on the road from Tharet to Laghouat, was suspended at the breaking out of the last insurrection, but is shortly to be continued. The same is the case with the third boring, on the plain of Eghris, near Mascara, which was temporarily stopped at a depth of 280 yards.

The Constantine province has been more successful than the other two in receiving water supply. Between Biskra and Tongourt forty-seven wells have been sunk, furnishing daily 19,293,000 gallons.

At Tongourt and in the oasis twenty-four Arab wells have been completed, yielding for the irrigation of the gardens 1,100,000 gallons per day. Beyond this, towards the south, four wells give 124,360 gallons.

Lastly, in the fertile plains of Hodoua, celebrated during the dominion of the ancient Romans, for its magnificent cultivation, sixteen wells have been sunk, furnishing per day 1,818,000 gallons.

Altogether there have been bored in the province of Constantine, up to the present day, ninety-one wells, furnishing daily 22,000,000 gallons allowed to flow freely over the surface. Some of these are of sufficient yield to irrigate large areas of cultivated land; but they happen to be situated in a part of the desert where European colonisation is impossible.

Nevertheless, the principal end of the establishment of these sources is attained. The desert is perfectly joined to the province of Constantine: the ancient oases are enlivened and new ones created, to the great blessing of the population.

HOOKE counted 7,000 facets in the eye of the housefly; Leeuwenhoek more than 12,000 in that of the dragon-fly; and Geoffroy cites a calculation according to which there are 34,650 of such facets in the eye of a butterfly.

The Americans have been hunting up the genealogy of General Sherman, and find that he is a descendant of Puritans of the Cromwell type, who emigrated to America in the troublesome times of Charles I.

Mrs. COBDEN has presented a bust of her illustrious husband to the Emperor Napoleon. The presentation was made through M. Michael Chevalier, and His Majesty has acknowledged the gift in a graceful and feeling letter. The commission for the bust was given to the artist by the late Mr. Henry Christy.

A TELEGRAM from Dresden announces that at the great musical festival of all Germany, which has met in that city, there were not less than 21,000 orphans gathered together under 700 banners. The striking off of all those musical societies presented a striking spectacle.

It is reported at Plymouth that that port will be visited by eight or ten French ships of war, and that an equal or greater number of British ships of war will be assembled in the Sound to receive them. The report also speaks of the arrival, at the same time, of some Austrian and Italian ships of war.

HOW TO LEAD ANIMALS.—Cattle, it is said, of all descriptions, horses, calves, and sheep, may be led by making a slipping noose, and fastening it to the lower jaw, passing the rope, which must be small, around the neck and through the noose on the jaw. It is a very easy way of leading a sheep, one not being obliged to go behind and "push." After once pulling, the sheep will follow right along, with no trouble.

A NEW BRITISH PLANT.—We have no doubt that many of our readers will be interested to know that Mr. G. S. Wintle, in his botanical rambles last month near Painswick, discovered a new addition to

the flora of Gloucestershire and English botany, in a beautiful plant named *Silene dichotoma*. According to Mr. Syme the plant occurs in south-eastern Europe (Austrian Hungary). It has probably been introduced into this country accidentally; and it will be interesting to observe if it appears another year.

There are about 80 Dissenters in the New Parliament, and these are divided into the following sects:—34 Roman Catholics, 15 Independents, 13 Unitarians, 7 Jews, 4 Quakers, 3 United Presbyterians, 2 Free Churchmen, 1 Baptist, and 1 Wesleyan. John Stuart Mill is not included in the above list, as there seems to be some doubt as to his religious belief.

A few days ago an interesting piece of antiquity was found at the bottom of the river by a diver, who was engaged removing the foundations of the abutments of Drogheda bridge. The axe, which was covered with silt, is 32 inches in length, the handle and blade forming one solid piece of iron. The blade is a very broad one, handsomely shaped, and faced with fine steel. Notwithstanding the entire being composed of iron, the weight is so equally balanced that it could be used with the greatest possible ease. Some gentlemen who have examined it affirmed that it was a battle-axe, while many of the old residents here state that they always had a tradition that people were brought to the Boyne bridge to be beheaded in great numbers, in times of outbreak, and when the work was over the axe was thrown into the river.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES TABLES.—MONEY RETURNABLE.

The new tables of the premiums to be charged under contracts for the grant of Government deferre d life annuities and monthly allowances under the Acts 16 and 17 Vic., cap. 45, and 27 and 28 Vic., cap. 43, the purchase-money being returnable, have just been issued. These tables complete the annuity portion of the tables contemplated by the two Acts above quoted, so that the whole scheme for the purchase of Government annuities by small payments through the Post Offices of the United Kingdom may now be said to be complete.

The tables now published are two in number, and with a short introductory letter from Sir Alexander Spearman, the Comptroller-General of the National Debt Office, occupy twenty-eight pages of closely-printed matter. The first is a table showing what monthly allowance, to commence on the first day of the month next following the expiration of 10, or 15 or 20, or 25 or 30, or 35 or 40, or 45 or 50 years, from the day of purchase may be purchased, according to the sex of the person on whose life the annuity is to depend, and according to his or her age at the time of purchase, by a monthly payment of eight shillings. Under this table a person aged twenty may, by payment of eight shillings a month for ten years, secure a monthly allowance for the remainder of life of 4s. 9d. if a male, or 4s. 5d. if the purchaser be a female; and should the person die before the annuity commences, or should he desire to give up the matter, he may, upon application, receive back all the money he had paid. At thirty years of age a male may, by paying 8s. a month until he is sixty, receive for the remainder of his life a monthly allowance of £1 14s. 2d. A female would, under similar circumstances, obtain a monthly allowance of £1 9s. 4d. The money paid will be returnable at any time before the annuity commences.

The second table is one showing what annual payment, or what single payment, must be made, according to the age and sex of the person on whose life the annuity is to depend, to purchase an annuity of £1, payable half-yearly, at and from the expiration of the second quarter next following the expiration of terms of years, ranging from a term of ten years to a term of fifty years, from the date of purchase. This table shows that a man who will be twenty-one next birthday, by paying down in one sum £13 8s. 10d., or paying £1 9s. 7d. per annum for ten years, may receive at the expiration of ten years, and for the remainder of his life, an annuity of £1 per annum. This annuity may, of course, be increased to £50 per annum on the same terms, and should the purchaser wish to give up his contract at any time before the annuity commences, or should he die before it commences, he or his representatives can obtain the return of the whole amount which he had paid, on application. A female who will be twenty-one next birthday may purchase on similar conditions an annuity of £1, to commence after ten years, for a payment down of £14 8s. 11d., or by annual payments for ten years of £1 10s. 8d. each; the money to be returned on the conditions above stated.

A young man in his 21st year may, by paying a single sum of £1 9s. 7d., secure an annuity of £1 per annum commencing when he is 71 years old, and continuing during the remainder of his life, and should he wish at any time before the annuity commences to

give up his contract he can do so, and obtain the repayment of all he has paid the Government on this account. He is not, of course, restricted to the purchase of an annuity of £1, but he may on the same terms as those last stated, purchase an annuity of any number of pounds not exceeding £50.

As this business is to be transacted under the supervision of the Post Office, the advantages of the measure will no doubt be extended in due time, under the provisions of Mr. Gladstone's Act of 1864, to all the 3,000 Post Office savings' banks and money-order offices in the United Kingdom; and purchasers of annuities will be able to effect their purchases, either by payment of one sum, or by periodical payments spread over a series of years, and obtain payment of their annuities and monthly allowances, at any of these 3,000 offices. The publication of tables for Government annuities, which annuities can be purchased and paid at any post-office in the United Kingdom, or which may be given up at any time before the annuity commences, and all the money paid returned to the purchaser, is a measure of great value to those timid persons who, fearing what they call the sinking of their money, never take the step in their earlier years of making a provision for their old age, when their power of working will cease altogether, or be reduced to such an extent as to be of little or no value to them as a means of obtaining their living.

The privilege of being able to obtain the return of their money whenever they require it will induce large numbers of persons to avail themselves of these new tables, and the advantages which the Government has now placed within the reach of the working classes, as well as of the middle classes, will, we are fully convinced, be of inestimable value to the community at large.

THE TRIUMPH OF GENIUS.

GENIUS is as varied in its species as the fragments of dissolved nature. The pursuit of it forms the occupation of the different working or rather industrious minds of the universe. Its failure of accomplishment their greatest pain, its triumph their greatest joy.

Ever since time began, since our first parents were placed in the garden of Eden, genius has reigned and triumphed. Look, if you please, at the poor student, who from day to day struggles with the maddening waves of adversity, and from night to night is found poring over volumes of ancient lore. Long after fair Luna's crescent disc has sunk to rest, and myriads of stars are sparkling from the blue dome of heaven, with aching head and weary frame he burns the "midnight oil." His feels within his nature the latent spark of genius, and determines to develop it. Go to the halls of learning in after years. There you will hear the burning words of eloquence as they will fall from the lips of that same poor student as he stands before you in the natural strength of manhood.

Behold for an instant the youthful painter; in the chill confines of his attic room, he plies his pencil; his wall is decorated by sketches of his own childish productions, from the first attempt with a piece of charcoal to the more finished specimens of copies from real life. Follow his course through the devious round of travel; lit, if you please, the veil which shrouds the future, and glance down the misty aisle. He has returned from his weary pilgrimage to the shrine of ancient art; he has drawn inspiration from the old masters, whose works still speak, though their authors are long since dead. He returns to his native land to exhibit to the spectators the creations of fancy which call forth deafening shouts of applause. His fame is established, his star, though slowly moving at first, has risen until it is the centre of the world's homage and admiration.

Roll back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, the tomb of ages, and with noiseless steps enter; nations long since buried in oblivion rise from their graves in all their primitive glory. Go with me to the queen city of the world, ancient Rome. Behold the intrepid Romulus, as he lays the foundation for that mighty capitol, and soon a small hamlet tells of human life; roll on a score of years, and the proud city stands as a monument of its founder's genius. One hundred times the wheels of time have told a year, and on seven hills she stands, proudly defying the world's competition.

A. B. C.

ABOUT eighteen miles from Auckland, New Zealand, an extensive coal-bed has been discovered, one seam of which is seven feet in thickness. The coal has been tried on board a steam-ship, and pronounced of a superior quality. Hitherto the colonists have had to import coal, and therefore the discovery is hailed by them with great pleasure; and there is no doubt that in time it will prove of greater importance to them than a new gold-field.

Coot EXPERIMENT.—The problem of suspending life by freezing is being tested. In Switzerland, a female convict who was sentenced to be suspended by the neck, has been handed over to the *savans* for them to suspend her life by freezing her. She is now enjoying an ice nap. It is rather too bad to make the first experiment on a woman; why not have frozen a man?—try an iced cobbler, for instance. It is rather a cool way of treating a lady, and if she wakes up, we should imagine she would look rather coldly on those who endeavour to thaw her frozen heart. Hamlet says to Ophelia: “Be thou chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny!” We imagine, however, that the Swiss convict, during the period she is frozen in ice, will be secure from all the shafts of malice. We trust the experiment may prove successful, and the suspension of life by freezing become a frozen fact.

FACETIA.

Why do dandies wear eye-glasses?—Because puppies are born blind.

A CERTAIN dissatisfied wife says that her husband is such a blunderer that he can't even try a new boot without “putting his foot in it.”

What is the difference between a woodman and a toilet jing?—One is a hewer of wood and the other a ewer of water.

HEARTLESS ATTEMPT AT BIGAMY.—A gentleman, who was courting, on enquiry was found to be wedded to his own visage.

“THAT was a horrible affair—the murder of Dean, and the sealing up of his remains in a tin box!” “What Dean?” asked half-a-dozen voices at once. “Sir Dean.”

“FATHER,” said a roguish boy, “I hope you won't buy any more gunpowder tea for mother.” “Why not?” “Because every time she drinks it she blows us up.” “Go to bed, sir, immediately.”

OUR rural contributor writes us word that he has enlarged his establishment, and now keeps a head of oxen, a head of hen, and several head of cabbage, while he is trying also to keep a-head of the times.

A GLASGOW journal advertises for two composers “who don't get drunk,” and adds that the editor does all the “getting drunk” necessary to support the dignity of the establishment.

AN American paper has seriously urged the Government to go and take Africa for the Africans, and Ireland for the Irish, then “smash England and drive the French out of Mexico.” A very taking programe.

A DIFFERENCE IN KIND.

Young Housekeeper:—“Have you any nice lobsters?”

Fishmonger:—“Here you are, M'm; fine lively fellow.”

Young Housekeeper:—“Oh! those aren't the kind at all. I want red ones.”

A WESTERN paper speaks of a wild turkey “shot by a gentleman weighing twenty-three pounds.” That must have been a very large turkey or a very small spartan.

An old gentleman accused his servant of having stolen his stick. The man protested perfect innocence, “Why,” rejoined his master, “the stick could never have walked off with itself.” “Certainly not, sir; unless it was a walking-stick.”

“How is it,” said one miss to another, “that John's never afraid, and I am?” “Because he's got a Roman nose, and feels safe. Don't you remember how we read that it has always been said that a Roman knows no danger?”

“Sm,” said a sturdy beggar to a benevolent man, “please give me a shilling, I am hungry and unable to procure food.” The shilling was given, when the beggar said: “You have done a noble deed. You have saved me from something which I fear I will have to come to.” “What is that?” said the benefactor. “Work,” was the mournful answer.

Hiss.—At a public meeting in New York, a few years ago, somebody called for “Beecher,” who was in one of the galleries, and he went down to the platform, where he was far from welcome, receiving instead a storm of hisses. Watching his opportunity, he let the indignant assemblage get so fairly out of breath, that he contrived to say, in his drollest fashion: “You remind me very much of my grandfather.” What his grandfather had to do with that meeting awakened general curiosity, and so he was allowed to go on. “My grandfather was a blacksmith; and a very poor one, too, I am sorry to say. Once he got a fine piece of steel, and said to himself, ‘I will make a broad-axe out of this.’ He put it in the fire, and heated it; and took it out and hammered it, and failed. Then he put it back in the fire and heated it again,

saying, “Might do for a hatchet; and again he took it out and hammered it, and again he failed.” All this time the audience listened, without seeing the faintest glimmer of a point; but one was coming. After going through the motions of making a hammer, but in vain, Mr. Beecher said: “At last the old man took the hot steel in his tongue, and walking to the water-barrel, said, ‘Well, there is one thing I can do, I can make a plough good hiss.’” After that, Mr. Beecher had the cheerful attention of his conciliated hearers.

THE FABSY.

While a parson was standing at his door in a country village he was accosted by a poor labouring man.

The parson told him he made it a rule not to encourage idleness; but if the man would get into his garden and root up the weeds he would pay him for it. “That's all I wish,” said the poor fellow.

“Well, then, come along with me, and I'll show you what's to be done.”

When they were in the garden the reverend gentleman agreed to give the man a shilling for his trouble; however, after the job was done, he thought that sixpence would be enough for the time the labourer had been employed.

The poor man being half-starved, and wishing to get himself some bread, finding the other would give him no more, agreed to take the sixpence on condition the reverend gentleman would teach him the Lord's Prayer, which he consented to do, beginning:

“Our Father—”

“What!” said the labourer, “both our Fathers?”

“Yes, yes; come, say after me—“Our Father—”

The labourer again asked:

“What your Father and mine, too?”

“To be sure,” replied the parson.

“Well, then,” said the labourer, “you must be a rogue to cheat your brother of a sixpence.”

SOME years ago, says Richardson, in his anecdotes of painting, a gentleman came to me to invite me to his house. I have a picture of Rubens, says he, and it is a rare good one. Little H., the other day, came to see it, and says it is a copy. If any one says so again, I'll break his head! Pray, Mr. Richardson, will you do me the favour to come and give me your real opinion of it?

SHERIDAN AND THE STORY-TELLER.

Those who are in the habit of telling prodigious stories ought to have good memories; but fortunately for the world, their memories are generally short ones. Sheridan used to deal with these mendacious pests in a manner peculiar to himself. He would never allow himself to be outdone by a verbal prodigy; whenever a monstrous story was told in his presence, he would outdo it by one of his own coinage, and put the narrator to the blush by a falsehood more glaring than his own. A gentleman in his hearing once narrated a sporting adventure of his.

“I was fishing one day, say in a certain cold spring, full of delicious trout, and soon caught a large mess. But what was really surprising, not a foot from the cold spring there was one of boiling water, so that when you wanted to cook your fish, all you had to do, after hooking them from the cold spring, was to pop them directly into the boiling.”

The company all expressed astonishment and incredulity at this monstrous assertion, with the exception of Sheridan.

“I know,” said he, “of a phenomenon yet more surprising. I was fishing one day, when I came to a place where there were three springs. The first was a cold one stocked with fish, the second a boiling spring, and the third a natural fountain of melted butter and parley.”

“Melted butter and parsley!” exclaimed the first story-teller; “impossible!”

PROFESSOR BLACKIE, “THE SCOTCH WIT.”—At the dinner to Mr. Macmillan, of the Edinburgh High School, a few days ago, Mr. Adam Black proposed the toast of the Universities of Scotland, connecting with it, in complimentary terms, the name of Professor Blackie. The professor, in response, said, “I never rise to return thanks for this toast without thinking of two wise men—the one was Socrates, and the other Adam Black. (Loud laughter.) It is recorded by Xenophon, the Boswell of Socrates, that Socrates said—‘Man should be the most pious of all animals, because, as compared with all other animals, man was a god.’ And I have remarked that, as compared with all other kinds of men, a Scotch professor is a god. (Laughter.) A boy at a Presbytery examination was asked, ‘What is the meaning of regeneration?’ ‘Oh, to be born again,’ he replied. ‘Quite right, Tommy; you're a very good boy. Would you not like to be born again?’ Tommy made no reply, but, being pressed for an answer, he at last said, ‘No.’ ‘Why, Tommy?’ Tommy replied, ‘for fear I might be born a lassie.’ (Roars of laughter.) My wise friend Adam Black made an application of the doctrine in a

much more academical and orthodox way. I was told the other day that the question was put to him, ‘Black, you have been a most successful merchant a great publisher, a Member of Parliament; you had the honour of being accepted by the metropolis of Scotland, and the still greater honour of being rejected by the metropolis. But, Black, if you were to be born again, in what capacity would you wish to be born?’ Black replied at once, ‘I should wish to be born again as a Scotch professor.’ (Laughter and cheers.) Is that true?”—Mr. Black: “Quite true.”—“Quite true; therefore I have very great satisfaction in responding to this toast, feeling that I am one of the most favoured of mortals.” (Laughter and applause.)

IN THE COUNTRY.

First Swell:—“Well, I confess if it was not the fashion, I would not come to the country!”

Second Swell:—“It is so distressing to see what old fashioned clothes and hats these people do wear! But the women do admire us so!”

THERE is an observing man about town who says he always took notice that, whenever he lived through the month of May he always lived through the year.

PRESERVE YOUR SIGHT.—An advertisement headed thus appears in the daily papers. We thought at first that some new remedy for failing sight had been discovered, but on reading it found that it only recommended people with weak eyes to use ingle-eyes (eyes in glass), or in other words—spectacles.

It is said that after the delivery of his grand farewell speech in the House of Lords, the first person Lord Westbury met was Lord Ebury, who, as is well known, has a fancy for altering the Church ritual. “My Lord,” said the ex-Chancellor to him, “you can now read the burial service over me with whatever alterations you think proper.”

GRADUAL EMANCIPATION.

Augustus:—“Why, Fred, what new freak of yours in legs is this?”

Frederick:—“Fact is, my boy, tight trousers are just coming in, and as sudden transitions don't agree with my constitution, I begin with one leg at a time!”

A RICH petroleum operator, gaunt as a skeleton, and ignorant as a hodman, went to an artist the other day to have his portrait taken. “Will you have it taken in oil or water-colours?” inquired the artist. “Ie, of course,” replied he. “It comes to me more natural; and, besides, it makes me look fatter.”

THE GENIUS OF THE AGE.—A fast youth was taken from college by his father to a solicitor to be an articled clerk. The agreement was made, and the notary remarked, “For the first six months from to-day you will not receive any salary; after that £80 a year.” “Very well, sir,” said the youth, “I shall return at the end of six months.”

“SLEEP is a great leveller,” said Mr. B.—yawning, as he closed a large volume just before retiring; “Plato, while asleep, was no greater than any other mortal: ergo, when asleep, I'm as great a man as Plato.” “Was Plato, when asleep, think you, your equal in every respect?” asked his friend. “Certainly.” “Then he must have been an awful snorer.”

RICH HERNS.—“Time is money,” is a sage saying. Thyme may be money, but the mint produces it. Shakespeare tells us of a “bank wherein the wild thyme grows.” A sweet time a man would have had getting money out of that bank! Bah! Time is a very good thing to be allowed, when a bill falls due, but after all we would rather have a mint of money, and we should then be sure of having a good time.

CHARLEY W.—, a manly little fellow of five years, fell and cut his upper lip so badly that a surgeon had to be summoned to sew up the wound. He sat in his mother's lap during the painful operation, pale, but very quiet, resolutely shutting back tears and moans. In her distress, the young mother could not refrain from saying, “Oh, doctor, I fear it will leave a disfiguring scar.” Charley looked up into her tearful face, and said, in a comforting tone, “Never mind, mamma; my moustache will cover it!”

THE BEAR AND THE TWO BIRDS.—Mr. Bear was at a public dinner, two gentlemen of the name of Bird being in company. After the cloth was removed, Mr. Bear, who was a good singer, was called on to oblige the company with a song. He immediately arose, and said, “Gentlemen, your conduct on this occasion is so highly improper that I cannot help noticing it.” “For what?” said the gentlemen. “That you should call on a Bear to sing when there are two birds in the company.”

It is usually felt as a very delicate and difficult duty, imposed on one at a wedding breakfast, to have to propose the health of the bridesmaids (Lord Palmerston, Mr. Bernal Osborne, or Mr. Oliphant alone expected from that difficulty). The awkwardness of

the situation was felt by a young country beau last week, who was thus honoured at the wedding of the eldest daughter of a very wealthy farmer (county not to be named). The fair bridesmaids were the four unmarried daughters of the millionaire farmer, and their health was thus proposed by the aforesaid young beau—“Well,” turning to the lucky newly-married husband, “you have got the pick of the batch.” The consternation of the company and the countenances of the expectant bridesmaids may be quite as readily imagined as described.

MATRIMONIAL.—A bachelor uncle, to whom his nieces applied for advice on the question of choosing between two suitors, one of whom was rich and the other poor—the latter, of course, being the most ardent as well as the favourite lover—sententiously replied, “My dear, the question being stripped of all illusory elements, your choice simply lies between love and beef. Now, love is an idea, while beef is a reality. Love you can get along without; but beef you must have. Therefore, make sure of your beef!”

A MAN AND A BROTHER.—An ingenious plan has been adopted by the Boston negro for “raising the wind.” Last winter, the Legislature of Massachusetts passed a law, fining every landlord the sum of fifty dollars who refused to allow his negro boarders to sit at the same table with the white ones. A good deal of money has been extorted in Boston by taking advantage of this law. The negroes stop at the hotels, demand places at the public tables, and when they are refused remind the landlords of the penalty, offering to commute it for five or ten dollars.

A DROLL story of a discourse between a French barrister and his client is going the round of the Hôpital. A man was recently accused of robbery, about which there was no mistake, and his *avocat* had an interview with him. At the end of it he said, “I cannot see that you have any defence. You had better, in my opinion, plead guilty at once; frankness is your only remedy.” The accused drew himself up with dignity. “Silence, sir!” he exclaimed. “You may know the theory of the law, but I am acquainted with it practically. You have but read and pleaded; I have been many times accused and condemned.”

LIKE A THOUSAND OF BRICKS.—Why are builders like rapid creepers?—Because they are fond of running up a house in a single summer.—*Fun.*

PoETICAL JUSTICE.—We take the following from a morning paper:—“The Baron de Bode.”—We are happy to hear that Government has at last recognized the long-contested claims of this gentleman, by conferring on his only daughter, Augusta, a grant of £1,000 a year.” We are happy to hear it too. Pam has shown, in thus shelling out, that like Landor’s celebrated sea-shell, he “Remembers his Augusta Bode.”—*Fun.*

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BOTTLE labels may be made indestructible by coating them with white of egg, and steaming them until they become opaque, and then drying them in an oven at 212 deg. The albumen becomes hard and transparent, and is unaffected by oils or acids.

USEFUL HINT TO MEAT-PIE MAKERS.—All learned toxicologists and chemists appear to have forgotten the important fact that if a meat-pie is made without a hole in the crust to let out certain emanations from the meat, colic, vomiting, and other symptoms of slight poisoning will occur.

NEW METHOD OF SALTING MEAT.—At the last meeting of the Academy of Sciences, M. Pienkowski detailed some experiments which showed that meat salted with acetate of soda is easily dried, keeps an agreeable odour, and moreover, is more easily unsalted than meat prepared with common salt.

NEW MODE OF PREPARING WORST.—M. Hychert, of Paris, has a new way of preparing worst in the making of beer. His plan is as follows:—Throw upon the ground malt, intended for the vat, enough cold water to form a thick mass. Take care to mix well the malt, to let the water penetrate into all its parts. Then let the mixture remain for about an hour, to obtain the dissolution of the diastase; at the end of that time the excess of water is let out containing the dissolved diastase. Stirring well, add to the mass in the vat or copper, whichever it may be, a sufficient quantity of hot water to arrive at a temperature of 75 deg. The mixture being perfectly homogeneous, let it remain some time, and then boil it or let it attain at least a temperature of 90 deg., be it in the vat (if there is a way of introducing steam) or be it in the copper, but mind and stir it well, or the malt will adhere to the sides of the vat or copper. Keep it boiling for about an hour, taking care to stir it constantly; remove it then to the vat (if the boiling

has been effected in a copper), and let it cool down to 75 deg.; now should be added the best part of the dissolved diastase, which being nearly cold, produces a fresh coldness. All this should be done whilst stirring, which must be continued for some time afterwards. Let the mass stand for about another hour, and then let off the wort, which, if the tempering has been successful, should be quite bright and clear, having a soft and agreeable taste. You may now add to that remaining in the vat the rest of the dissolved diastase and enough water to raise the temperature to 75 deg., and again proceed in the manner before advised. If the malt in the first place has been properly ground from the first tempering, nearly all the starch will have been turned to sugar; but if the ground malt has not been enough crushed, you make with profit a third or several temperings, in which case you must be careful of your diastase. By this proceeding all the existing starch is converted into sugar, which augments considerably the quantity of wort, and makes it singularly bright and clear; it does not contain any particle of amidine, and is perfectly free from dextrine; and again, being nearly all sugar, it results that the beer manufactured has a very agreeable taste, and will keep a considerable time without turning sour.

THE FERRY.

Now pull away—away, my boys!
And take us swiftly over!
My lady-love has left her home,
To follow Ralph the Rover!

The foe is close, in hot pursuit,
On foot, on horse, in carriage;
They are too late, they are too late,
To stop our joyful marriage.

They are too late, too late, my bride,
Such hearts as ours to sever!—
Our little craft awaits us here,
Just two knots down the river.

Now pull away—away, my boys!
And take us safely over!
Then friend or foe—why let him come
Who wishes Ralph the Rover!

From fore to aft my bark is slight,
Her raking masts are slender;
But hearts she soon will have on board
Who bravely will defend her!

My lady fears not stormy winds,
Nor yet the raging billow;
Her heart is brave, though slight her form,
And graceful as the willow.

Now pull away—away, my boys!
And take us swiftly over!
You never failed, in time of need,
In faith to Ralph the Rover.

H. H. G.

GEMS.

WHEN men are full of envy, they disparage everything, whether it be good or bad.

THE water that has no taste is purest; the rain that has no odour is freshest; and of all the modifications of manner, the most generally pleasing is simplicity.

In most quarrels there is a fault on both sides. A quarrel may be compared to a spark, which cannot be produced without a flint as well as a steel; either of them may hammer on wood for ever, and no fire will follow.

MAN doubles all the evils of his fate by pondering over them. A scratch becomes a wound, a slight an injury, a jest an insult, a small peril a great danger, and a slight sickness often ends in death by the brooding apprehensions of the sick. We should always look on the bright side of life’s picture.

IT may be boldly affirmed, that good men generally reap more substantial benefits from their afflictions than bad men do from their prosperities; and what they lose in wealth, pleasure, and honour, they gain with most advantage in wisdom and goodness, and tranquillity of mind.

THERE is no office higher than that of a teacher of youth, as there is nothing on earth more precious as the mind, soul, and character of a child. No office should be regarded with greater respect. The first minds in a community should be encouraged to assume it. Parents should do all but impoverish themselves to induce those to become the guardians and guides of their children. To this good all their show and luxury should be sacrificed. There they should be lavish while they strain themselves in everything else. They should wear the cheapest clothes, live on the plainest food, if they can in no other way secure

to their families the best of instruction. They should have no anxiety to accumulate property for their children, provided they could place them under influences which will awaken their faculties, inspire them with higher principles, and fit them to bear a manly part in the world. No language can express the cruelty and folly of that economy which, to leave a fortune to a child, starves his intellect and impoverishes his heart.

STATISTICS.

CHINESE TEA AND SILK.—The shipments from Chinese ports to the latest date were 117,913,545lb of tea, being 722,202lb above last year’s export, and 30,719 bales of silk, nearly 10,000 bales less than last season.

ESPARTO GRASS.—The quantity of Esparto grass imported into this country was 733 tons during the first half-year of 1863, 25,750 tons in the same period of 1864, and 26,198 tons in the six months ending 30th June this year. The figures we have quoted certainly include vegetable fibre other than Esparto grass, but the quantity of such other fibre is inconsiderable, only 497 tons having been imported this year.

HOPS.—While the imports of foreign grown hops appear to have fallen off this year, they have very greatly increased since 1850. In that year the imports were 6,479 cwt.; in 1854, 119,040 cwt.; in 1861, 149,176 cwt.; and in 1863, 147,281 cwt. The value has increased considerably. In 1860, 568,901l.; in 1861, 567,762l.; in 1862, 723,034l.; in 1863, 626,660l.; in 1864, 549,863l.

WHEAT EXPORTS.—The value of the corn exported from the United Kingdom seems to have sunk to a minimum last year. Thus, it amounted to only 17,555l., as compared with 52,159l. in 1863, 20,195l. in 1862, 647,475l. in 1861, 14,068l. in 1860, 22,664l. in 1859, 10,357l. in 1858, 186,059l. in 1857, 285,912l. in 1856, and 120,687l. in 1855. The exceptionally large figures observable for 1861 are attributable, of course, to the large movement of wheat to France, to make good the somewhat exaggerated *crise alimentaire* of that year.

GERMAN YEAST.—The payments made for German dried yeast during the last ten years will probably excite some surprise from their magnitude. In 1855, the value of this import was 143,851l.; in 1856, 171,374l.; in 1857, 180,378l.; in 1858, 111,539l.; in 1859, 172,215l.; in 1860, 184,079l.; in 1861, 186,337l.; in 1862, 204,404l.; in 1863, 209,837l.; and in 1864, 231,748l.; a yearly increasing amount and forming an aggregate value in the ten years of more than one million and three-quarters sterling for this simple article.

THE NATIONAL REGISTER.—Civil registration was established in England in the middle of the year 1837, and at the close of 1863, 33,997,135 names had been inscribed upon the register—the names of 15,719,673 children born since that date, of 7,761,702 persons married, and 10,515,760 persons who died. 1,548,274 additional names were entered on the register in the year 1863, and by this time the number exceeds 36,000,000. 7,715 searches were made at the central office in the year 1863 in the index to this vast throng of names. Some births, especially of illegitimate children in large towns, still escape registration; and some of the marriages, being celebrated according to the rights of two religious persuasions, are returned and entered twice over.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE potato blight has made its appearance in the Isle of Wight.

FOUR newly-acquired Mexican flags have just been deposited at the Invalides.

AN EXHIBITION OF ENGLISH, FRENCH, AND GERMAN PICTURES will be held in New York this year.

THE OFFICIAL RETURN OF THE LOSS OF LIFE ON THE FEDERAL SIDE DURING THE WAR HAS JUST BEEN MADE. THE NUMBER KILLED OUTRIGHT, OR DIED OF DISEASE, IS 825,000, AND THE NUMBER OF WOUNDED NEARLY A MILLION!

THE FRENCH WINE TRADE.—The vines everywhere promise well, presenting a brilliant aspect, which induces great hopes both in respect to quality and quantity. In most vineyards the vintage will begin early this year.

ALPINE PLANTS.—A more useful, though not so interesting an Alpine ascent as that of the Matterhorn, has lately been made by M. Martins, Professor of Natural History at Montpellier. In a scientific ascent of Mont Blanc, M. Martins collected no less than 82 species of plants near the Grands Mulets, 24 of which were phanerogams, 26 messes, 2 hepaticæ, and 30 lichens.

CONTENTS.

THE STRANGER'S SECRET	545	THE TURQUOISE RING	564
JACK, THOUGH POOR	548	CHARLIE; OR, HOW I	568
THE HEIRESS	549	GAINED MY WISH	569
THE LADY'S PLEA	551	LONGEVITY	571
EVA ASHLEY	553	SCIENCE	572
TEMPTATION	556	WELLS IN ALGIERS	573
BIRD SONG	558	STATISTICS	575
THE SPOILED CHILD	558	FACTILE	574
BEEF IN ROXBURGHSHIRE	559	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	575
HIS MAJESTY'S VISIT TO	560	THE FERRY	575
GERMANY	560	(GEMS)	575
SIR JOHN	561	MISCELLANEOUS	575

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SILKWORM.—Apply to any dealer in silkworms.

D. (Sheffield).—The marriage of the daughter would be legal.

SANCER J. R.—We will not fail to comply with your request, when opportunity is afforded.

GR. —The poem entitled "Broken-hearted" is very much too lengthy for our columns, and is declined with thanks.

E. AND T.—We must refer you to Hoyle, whose rules are generally admitted as decisive of disputed points in games with cards.

P. J. T.—Pink-dye cosmetic is prepared from washed safflower, 2 oz.; salt of tartar, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; cold water, 1 quart; let stand for three hours; then express the liquor, and strain it.

THOMAS S.—You must write for further information on the subject to the Secretary of the Canadian Amalgamation Society. All dealers in game must have a license.

W. L.—The poems entitled "The Daisy" and "Life Flowers" are not deficient in poetic feeling; but as they fail to reach our standard, they are declined with thanks.

H. DELCROIX.—The hair-dye called tincture of walnut is made of a strong tincture of the outer rind of green walnuts. You may scent it with oil of lavender.

D. C. A.—We cannot supply you with any sure set of rules for judging of personal character from the handwriting; our opinion being, as we have already stated, that it affords generally only a vague and rather indefinite indication.

C. P.—The pine-apple is the fruit of the plant *Ananassa sativa*. In Europe it is chiefly used as a delicacy of the table; but in tropical climates it is said to be valuable in renal affections.

J. G. is desirous of corresponding matrimonially with a gentleman in a respectable position. Is nineteen years of age, has brown hair and dark eyes, is of a cheerful disposition, and very domesticated.

W. P.—A very useful powder for the removal of warts and soft corns may be made of ivy leaves ground to powder. A poultice should be applied with a rag, the part being first moistened with strong vinegar.

NELLY B.—The cost of obtaining a divorce varies according to the circumstances of the case, the position of the parties, and the counsel engaged. Application must be made to the Judge of the Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes.

A. D.—A Turkish depilatory for the removal of superfluous hair is made thus:—Orpiment (that is, sulphures of arsenic), one part; quicklime, nine parts. For use, it is mixed with a little soap-lease and powdered starch. (But see also the reply to "Jane".)

A. B., a respectable middle-aged widow, tall and genteel, with dark hair and eyes, good-looking, and in every way suitable to make a home comfortable and happy, will be glad to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman, who may be either a bachelor or a widower.

FLORA AND BLANCHE wish to correspond matrimonially with two military gentlemen, who must be tall, dark, and passably good-looking. "Flora" is twenty years of age, is tall and fair; "Blanche" is eighteen, fair, and of medium height; and both would make good wives.

H. H.—The standard mark for gold is not the same in every part of the United Kingdom. It is for England a lion rampant; Edinburgh, a thistle; Glasgow, a lion rampant; Ireland, a harp crowned. For silver the mark is a figure of Britannia. If under twenty-two carats gold is marked with the figure 18.

RONDELETIA.—Very fine "eau de lavande," or lavender water, may be prepared thus:—Take Mitchell's oil of lavender, 8 oz.; essence of musk, 4 oz.; essence of ambergris and oil of bergamot, of each, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; rectified spirit, 2 gallons. Mix well. This perfume has received the commendation of Her Majesty.

A. T. M. desires to correspond with a gentleman who is in a respectable position, and is tall and good-looking, with an ultimate view to matrimony. "A. T. M." is seventeen years of age, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, with dark hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion; and is very good-tempered and affectionate.

EMELINE, who is twenty-two years of age, has a tall commanding figure, black hair and eyes, an affectionate and loving temper, and an income of £500 yearly, would like to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman whose income is not beneath her own, and who must be handsome and cheerful.

JANE.—The following is a very effective and safe depilatory for the removal of superfluous hair:—Hydrosulphite of soda (crystallised), three parts; quicklime, in fine powder, ten parts; starch, ten parts; mix with water, then apply to the skin, and scrape off in two or three minutes with a wooden knife.

R. B. J.—The hatching of eggs by artificial heat is a very ancient practice, and was known to the Egyptians. The art was introduced into Europe by M. Bonnemain in 1775. The source of heat employed by him was a circulatory hot-water apparatus, and the temperature maintained by it 100° Fahr. His plan was to introduce daily only one-twentieth of the eggs the apparatus was capable of receiving, so that on the twenty-first day the first chickens were hatched, and a like number every day afterwards. Among the trays containing the eggs he placed saucers of water, to

compensate for the absence of moisture derived in natural incubation by transpiration from the body of the hen. The chickens, as soon as hatched, were transferred to a nursery or chick-room, also artificially heated, and were fed with crushed millet-seed. Several attempts have been made of late years to extend artificial incubation, with various success. The most recent is a patent process, which seems to be very successful.

MADELINA, who is twenty-one years of age, has a slight graceful figure, brown hair, deep grey eyes, and an income of £500 per annum, is very anxious to be conducted to the hymenial altar. She has a loving disposition and cheerful temper, is very fond of music, and thinks it a hardship that she has not hitherto received an eligible matrimonial "proposal."

INCOCOGNI, who is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, good-looking, good-tempered, and having good expectations, is desirous of receiving a matrimonial introduction to a young lady, who must be between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, well educated, respectfully connected, and possessed of an amiable disposition. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

C. H. O., who is twenty-two years of age, is 5 ft. 10 in. in height, neither dark nor fair, with black curly hair, slight whiskers and moustache, very lively and affectionate, and holds a Government appointment, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with a tall young lady, not over twenty-two years of age, nor very fair, who must be respectfully connected, and domesticated.

THE MEETING OF THE SWALLOWS.

From shady nooks and hollows, see, as each the other follows,

Shoot the eager clustering swallows 'neath the wild September sky—

In liquid circles swinging as with joy each heart were ringing,

With a low suppressed singing—hither, thither now they fly:

Now when golden woods look glowing, and the wild Norse winds are blowing,

They are gathering, they are going, they are gathering,

They have fled!

One all! Oh when returning? for we know their hearts are yearning

For the smoke wreaths ever turning round the roofs where they were bred.

We shall miss you, dearest swallows, miss your warnings o'er the shallows,

When ye dip mid reeds and sallows with a touch so light and free;

Miss you when the rain wind walleth, when the purple cloud low traffeth,

As the raven slowly saileth to the dead bough in the tree,

Oh, we love you, ever, ever; and we pray the sweet spring weather

Back may bring you altogether ere the first blide bells have blown.

We too are wanderers, fleeting—Oh like you may we have greeting,

Friends long lost, and kindred meeting, in the far land and unknown!

L'ESPRESS.—"Précis writing" is not any particular description of calligraphy; the term signifies simply the abstract of official documents which is made in government offices. It is considered a merit to be able to make a lucid condensation or abstract of these; and this it is which is called *précis writing*. There are no published instructions on the subject.

ALICE, who is seventeen years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, has dark brown hair, with eyes of the same colour, and is considered nice-looking, has a good temper and a lively disposition, is willing to bestow a loving heart on any gentleman who may feel disposed to woo her and win it. "Alice" who thinks she would make a very loving little wife, has received a plain English education, and is considered a good pianist.

CERBERUS.—The sapphire, ruby, oriental amethyst, emerald, and topaz, are the gems next in value to diamonds; and the composition of all of them consists of nearly pure alumina or clay, with a minute portion of iron as the colouring matter. A perfect ruby (the red variety of sapphire) if it weigh one carat is worth about £10. If two carats, £40, and three carats, £150; a blue sapphire of ten carats is worth £60; the topaz and emerald vary very much in value, the

SCHOOLBOY.—The so-called "fifteen decisive battles of the world" are—the battle of Marathon, A.D. 490; the defeat of the Athenians at Syracuse, A.D. 413; the battle of Arbela, A.D. 331; the battle of Metapontum, A.D. 207; the victory of Arminius over the Roman legions under Varus, A.D. 9; the battle of Chalons, A.D. 451; the battle of Tours, A.D. 732; the battle of Hastings, A.D. 1066; Joan of Arc's victory over the English at Orleans, A.D. 1429; the defeat of the Spanish Armada, A.D. 1588; the battle of Blenheim, A.D. 1704; the battle of Fultown, A.D. 1709; the victory of the revolted American colonists over General Burgoyne, at Saratoga, A.D. 1777; the battle of Valmy, 1792; and the battle of Waterloo, 1815.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

A. E., who is eighteen years of age, has dark hair and eyes, and is thoroughly domesticated, would like, with a view to matrimony, to receive the *carte de visite* of "E. F."

HENRY C. is willing to correspond matrimonially with "Letitia Malvina." Is twenty-four years of age, tall, of fair complexion, and considered good-looking.

MAY B. wishes to correspond with "Matrimonium." Is twenty years of age, domesticated, good-tempered, and capable of making home happy.

JENNY will be most happy to correspond and exchange *cartes de visite* with "Matrimonium." Is tall and fair, possesses the qualities specified, and has a small annual income.

LILY, who is twenty years of age, fair, with light hair and blue eyes, and is thoroughly domesticated, would like to exchange *cartes de visite* with "Reginald," as a matrimonial preliminary.

EUGENE O'MORE, in reply to "Letitia Malvina," forwards a more tender, impassioned, and poetical epistle—just such a *billet-doux* as a native of the Emerald Isle, who is so deeply enamoured as Eugene says he is, would naturally pen. Its length, however, is fatal to its insertion; and we can only repeat his statement that he is twenty-two years

of age, rather tall, with hazel eyes, dark beard and moustache; is at present a student of the Middle Temple, and will shortly be called to the Irish bar.

SEMINO begs to offer himself to "Letitia Malvina." Is twenty-one years of age, tall, fair, and considered very handsome, an accomplished pianist, and well educated.

A. D., who is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in height, of dark complexion, and good-tempered, would like to open a correspondence with "Letitia Malvina," with a view to matrimony. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

GEORGE H. responds to the wishes of "Rosalie," and will be most happy to form her acquaintance, with an ultimate view to a matrimonial engagement; but is not in affluent circumstances.

A. B. C. will be happy to correspond and exchange *cartes de visite* with "Letitia Malvina," with a matrimonial object. Is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, and in business.

J. H. wishes to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes de visite* with "Letitia Malvina." Is 5 ft 7 in. in height, of dark complexion, with black hair and hazel eyes, and is good-tempered.

HELEN, who is nineteen years of age, prepossessing in appearance, has good musical abilities, amiable, and has a small annuity, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with "Eugene Dudley."

PERI, who is eighteen years of age, fair, and an excellent pianiste, would be pleased to correspond matrimonially with "Eugene Dudley." Is prepossessing in appearance, and of a gentle, affectionate disposition.

TWOSHOP wishes to correspond matrimonially with "Ralph Barton." Is twenty-six years of age, has brown hair and blue eyes, is very cheerful, domesticated, and fond of home. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged, as a preliminary.

CORA would be pleased to exchange *cartes de visite* and correspond matrimonially with "J. L. F." Is twenty years of age and rather tall, has dark eyes and hair, is thoroughly domesticated, and quite sure she could make home happy.

LILY would like to exchange *cartes de visite* and correspond with "J. A. E." with a view to a matrimonial engagement. Is eighteen years of age, fair, tolerably tall, of affectionate disposition, very domesticated, and musical.

ARTHUR ALFRED, who is twenty-six years of age, would be most willing to enter into a matrimonial correspondence with "Letitia Malvina." Is an artist by profession, and not without some reputation, and would be glad, as a preliminary, to exchange *cartes de visite*.

G. C. M. and LUCIUS O'TRIGG will be happy to exchange *cartes de visite* with "Annie" and "Emma." "G. C. M." is twenty years of age, fair, and prepossessing; "Lucius O'Trige" is dark, and considered handsome. Each is in a good social position.

CHARLES D. offers himself as a candidate for the hand and heart of "Letitia Malvina." Is a foreigner, twenty-four years of age, tall, has dark hair and eyes, and is considered handsome; is very fond of home, and of very respectable family. Will be most happy to exchange *cartes de visite*.

E. P. B. G. has been much attracted by the matrimonial notification of "Emma," the youngest of the three sisters (No. 116), and would be happy to exchange addresses and *cartes*. Is eighteen years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, with brown hair and blue eyes; has a salary of £100 a year, with good expectations.

G. C. H. will be happy to make an exchange of *cartes*, as a preliminary to a matrimonial correspondence, with either "Kitty" or "Anna." Is twenty-five years of age, tall and dark, of gentlemanly appearance, very steady, fond of music and home comforts; has a good income, and, belonging to a wealthy family, has also good prospects.

DONALD would be glad to form the acquaintance of "Letitia Malvina." Is twenty-five years of age, tall, dark, good-looking, and distinguished in appearance; has had a liberal education, and possesses an income of £500 per annum, which will shortly be augmented. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged as a preliminary.

NELLY and LAURA wish to open a matrimonial correspondence and exchange *cartes* with "T. A. B." and "A. Bachelor." "Nelly," who is nineteen years of age, is tall, with fair complexion, auburn hair, and blue eyes. "Laura" is eighteen years of age, tall, and a brunet. Both are thoroughly domesticated.

OMEGA thinks "Letitia Malvina" would suit him admirably as a wife. Is nearly thirty years of age, has lived long abroad, speaks three languages, has had a liberal education, possesses an income of £150 per annum, and would be glad to enter at once into correspondence and exchange *cartes* with a view to matrimony.

GEORGE and ALFRED will have great pleasure in corresponding and exchanging *cartes* with "Elizabeth" and "Mary Ann." "George" is twenty-six years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, with fair complexion and blue eyes; "Thomas" is eighteen years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, with blue eyes and fair complexion; "Alfred" is 5 ft. 8 in. in height, of dark complexion, with black hair and eyes, and possesses £250 a year.

HARRY, THOMAS, and WALTER would like, with a view to matrimony, to correspond with "Kitty," "Anna," and "Emma," respectively. "Harry" is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, with blue eyes; "Thomas" is eighteen years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, with blue eyes and fair complexion; "Walter" is seventeen years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, with blue eyes and dark complexion.

ACACIUS C. will be most happy to open a matrimonial correspondence with "Letitia Malvina." Professional income at present only £150, but rapidly increasing; age, twenty-four; moderately tall, of very cheerful disposition, rather fond of society, and very good-tempered; is considered good-looking, but thinks that an exchange of *cartes* would be a better criterion than a pen-and-ink portrait.

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